

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, March 1, 1899, by Frank Tousey.

No. 125.

NEW YORK, JUNE 14, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS AND THE MISSING GIRL;

OR—

A CLEW FOUND IN THE DARK.

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.



Harry covered the negro kidnapper with his pistol, while Old King Brady listened to the thrilling story of the missing girl. Old Dinah was terrified.

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CHAPTER I.

THE CASE OF THE MISSING GIRL.

Two men stood in the doorway of the Hoffman House on Broadway in the City of New York.

They watched the throng surging past on the busy thoroughfare. The various types of humanity drifting along in that great human maelstrom seemed to interest them.

Beside them stood two other men. One was a chappie sucking the head of his cane and ogling the pretty girls as they passed by. The other was a lanky, square-jawed Southerner with sunken eyes and haggard features half shaded by a wide slouch hat.

The other two, or rather the first two, did not seem aware of their presence.

But this was not so, as developments will presently disclose.

As a matter of fact, they were two of New York's most noted detectives.

James Brady, or as he was better known, Old King Brady, was the tall, powerful framed old man in the tight-fitting blue coat and slouch hat.

He was a type of the old school and yet adhered to many of the old characteristics of dress and manners.

His companion was young and athletic and handsome.

Harry Brady, or Young King Brady, as he was called, was really a protégé of the older detective.

But he was scarcely inferior to him in the matter of talent and sagacity. The two were the warmest of friends.

They traveled together and many a case of mystery and crime they solved.

In fact, it might be said that they had never failed in the solution of a case.

The Bradys would never have been taken for detectives as they stood now in the entrance of the hotel.

They were watching or shadowing the two men near them, the tall man with the slouch hat and the chappie with the cane.

In answer to a possible question as to a reason for this, we will take the reader back a ways in our narrative.

Three days since the detectives had finished up a bank robbery case in the upper part of the State.

Upon arriving in New York they were summoned at once to the office of the Chief of the Secret Service.

"Gentlemen," said that worthy, "I have the king pin case for you now."

"That is what we want," said Old King Brady.

"Then you are ready for it?"

"Yes."

"What is the case?" asked Harry.

"Of course," replied the chief, "that is the first thing. I will give you the notes from my book."

The chief opened his ledger.

"Let me see," he said, "I have here the name of Eugene Graves. He is a wealthy operator in Wall street. He lives in Fifth avenue and has a young daughter, who is just about ready to send away to school.

"Graves worships this daughter, whose name is Myrtle. She is the only relative and he sets great store by her. But

things in this world upon which we set the most value are often stolen from us.

"Myrtle has been stolen from her home, or at least so her father believes. She is a missing girl.

"A week ago Graves returned home to find a letter which was in her handwriting on the table. I have a copy of it here.

"To my dear father:

"I know you will not approve of the name I have taken. But it was my only hope of happiness. Long since I met and fell in love with a young man whom I know you would not have approved of. Satisfied that you would never give your consent to our marriage, I have decided to go away with him.

I love him very much and we shall be very happy. I am sorry to leave my dear father, and if he will forgive me, we may return. But it was my only way. It will be of no use for you to follow us, for you can never find us.

"Yours respectfully,
MYRTLE GRAVES.

"Of course," resumed the chief, "Graves was nearly made insane by this discovery. At once he inserted a notice in the papers of various cities promising full pardon if Myrtle and her lover would return.

"But he received no answer. Detectives were employed. No clew was gained.

"Then a horrible suspicion seized him. What if his daughter had been kidnapped and the letter was a forgery? He employed experts to examine the chirography. They have reported unanimously that the handwriting was that of Myrtle Graves.

"But they find certain peculiarities which they affirm indicate that the letter might have been written under duress or in some perverted state of mind induced possibly by a drug or hypnotism.

"So he has decided to employ every means possible to unearth the mystery and learn the facts in regard to his daughter's fate.

"If she has been kidnapped he will bring the villains to justice, no matter what the cost.

"The latest entry I have here is a letter received by him a day or two since from Charleston, South Carolina, and which is written in a rough, illiterate hand.

"To Mister Graves, Wall Street, New York:

"Deer Sir: Your gal is safe down yeer, an' we uns can send her back to ye safe an' sound fer ten thousand dollars in gold. Rite to Pete Jackson, Charleston Hotel."

"There you are," said the chief in conclusion. "Now the question is did Myrtle Graves elope with her lover, or was she murdered, or kidnapped by some of Graves' pals, or possibly by crooks, with the hope of securing a ransom?"

The two Bradys sat silent for some while.

Old King Brady reflectively took a chew of tobacco from a big hook he carried.

This was his invariable practice when he was puzzled.

Harry whistled softly.

Finally the old detective said:

"It's crooked work."

"You think so?"

"That's on the face of it."

"Well, I think so. But what is their purpose?"

"That remains to be seen."

"Well," said the chief, "you are the best men we have to undertake this case. Will you do it?"

Old King Brady nodded.

"Let us make notes," he said. "I think we can round up the guilty parties."

Both detectives made copious notes from the chief's notebook. As the old detective inspected the letter from Charleston, S. C., he gave a stare.

"Here you are," he said.

"Eh, what?" asked the chief.

"This is the important letter."

"Indeed!"

"It is supposed to have been sent from Charleston, but it is plainly postmarked New York City."

The chief was surprised.

"The deuce!" he exclaimed. "I never thought of noticing the postmark. Why, so it is. What does that indicate?"

"A very important fact," said Old King Brady. "The kidnappers, and perhaps their victim, are right here in New York."

"Then this Southern story is a blind?"

"No, they undoubtedly intend to round up at Charleston. That simplifies matters for us."

The chief looked admiringly at the old detective.

"I believe you have second-sight," he said. "No obstacle exists that you cannot penetrate."

"Bosh!" said the old detective. "It is a process of simple deduction. Well, here is another clew."

The chief was astonished.

"What?" he gasped.

"This is hotel correspondence paper."

"How do you know that?"

"By its appearance. Also the fact that the heading of the hotel has been cut off. This was written in some hotel. Let me see. Some hotels watermark their paper."

Old King Brady held the letter up against the light.

"Ah!" he cried, triumphantly. "There you are. It is easy to read the watermark: Hoffman House."

"Hoffman House?" gasped the surprised chief.

"You may see for yourself."

"Well, I am beaten! Then this letter was written right at the Hoffman House in this city and did not come from Charleston?"

"That is just it."

"What does that indicate?"

"It indicates that the writer was a Southerner, and that he is now or has been stopping at the Hoffman House."

"Our plan now is very simple. We will go to that hotel and inspect the register. Every Southerner who is there

or has been there will be an object of suspicion and will receive our attention."

"Enough!" cried the chief. "Go on with the case. I'll wager my year's salary you win out."

"Don't be too sure," said Old King Brady, pessimistically. "Sometimes failure is not to be avoided."

A few moments later the detectives took their leave.

CHAPTER II.

SOUTHWARD BOUND.

And this explains the presence of the Bradys on the steps of the Hoffman House at the opening of our story.

"Harry," said Old King Brady, in an undertone, "I am satisfied that young dude is in the game."

"Well, that may be," agreed the young detective. "He don't look as if he had brains enough to be bad."

"Appearances don't count. The worst criminal I ever knew in my life was masquerading as a priest."

"Then you think that the chappie is masquerading?"

"I don't know!"

"The old Southerner may be our man."

"Yes."

The Bradys knew that these two men were sojourning at the Hoffman House.

The Southerner was registered as Colonel Jack Chivington, of Savannah, Georgia. He had a room on the Broadway side of the hotel.

The young man was also registered and gave the name of Elwood Burton, of Richmond, Virginia.

The two seemed to be on friendly terms, though they seemed an ill-mated couple.

Suddenly Chivington stepped out and hailed a hansom.

He stepped into it and the Bradys heard him give a number on lower Broadway.

They knew this to be the ticket office of the Clyde Line Steamers, which plied between Charleston and New York.

Elwood Burton waved his hand in adieu to Chivington.

"Ta, ta, Colonel!" he said, with a flat voice, "I'll see you later."

The colonel leaped into the cab and drove away.

The Bradys looked at each other.

"Well," said Harry.

"Well?"

"It is easy to see what his purpose is."

"He is going to get passage for Charleston."

"Yes."

"Harry," said Old King Brady, slowly, "Chivington is a Southerner. He is going to Charleston. The letter inquiring about the reward of ten thousand purported to come from Charleston. I believe that is where we shall find work out for us."

"I agree with you."

"Let us, therefore, follow Chivington thither."

"Then you think that Chivington is our man?"

"I do not know. That remains to be seen."

"At least, it is the most tangible thing in sight."

"Just so."

"Very good. Suppose we do down and engage our passage also."

"All right."

The Bradys stepped into a cab. They were driven to the office of the Clyde Line in lower Broadway.

"Will you let me see your passenger list?" asked Old King Brady. "I wish to see if a friend is among your passengers."

"Certainly!" replied the clerk.

The old detective ran his eye down the list.

He gave a start.

There was the name of Colonel Jack Chivington booked for Charleston. Below it also was the name of Elwood Burton.

This was the first intimation the detectives had gained that Burton was going also.

Old King Brady and Harry gave fictitious names and secured passage also.

The game was on.

The more the detectives thought it over the better satisfied they were that they had hit the right lead.

In all respects Chivington tallied with the presumed personnel of the writer of the reward letter.

The Iroquois was to sail that night. The Bradys went to their lodgings to get a few changes of linen, and some slight disguises.

This was all they carried and it only occupied a small corner in a light satchel.

Useless luggage is eschewed by the keen practical detective.

Nothing was carried that would in any way hamper their movements.

When the sailing hour came the detectives went on board the steamer and sought their stateroom.

Chivington and Burton were already there and pacing the deck.

Soon the steamer dropped out of the harbor and stood away to the southward.

The seasick ones of the passengers quickly sought their berths.

Chivington and Elwood were not among these.

Neither were the Bradys.

The tall Southern colonel and the chappie made themselves quite agreeable in the cabin.

There were lively people on board and soon all sorts of high jinks were inaugurated.

Elwood furnished no little amusement for the others.

He was droll in his speech and good-natured in the face of all the railery aimed at him.

The colonel was amiable but had the Southern hauteur and reserve which forbade familiarity.

The Bradys, of course, dipped in with the rest.

And they quickly became the leaders.

As Mr. Dingley and son, James, they were very popular.

Elwood took a great shine to Harry and said:

"I'm dead stuck on you, deah boy. You aw such a jolly boy, don't you know. Beastly jolly."

"Wait till we get to Charleston," said Harry, "We'll paint the town."

"He—he, haw—haw! I should say so. But, I say, they tell me these Southerners are demned chilly to us Northern tourists."

"They like our money."

The chappie thought this was awful funny and laughed till his sides ached.

Harry saw that he was a youth of an exceedingly shallow type.

But yet, he might be a criminal. The young detective was not to be deceived.

"I say, Ellie," he said, familiarly. "I'll bet you're a dead easy mark for the girls."

"Eh, aw, what do you mean by that, you joker you?"

"Well, I mean that you are fond of the fair charmers."

"Of course I am. Ain't you?"

"Well, I should say. Do you know any pretty girls in Charleston?"

Elwood sucked his cane a moment, thoughtfully.

"I know one," he said.

"Ah! I suppose she has a sister or some friend?"

"Haw, haw! Ah, see! You are a sharp fellah, don't you know. Haw—haw. I'll ask her. But you can't cut me out, don't you know. She's engaged to me."

"Oh, she is. So you are really going to marry and settle down?"

"Oh—I—I don't know. If she'll marry me, of course I'll do it."

"Oh, then she hasn't agreed?"

"Well, aw, that is—I think she will, don't you know."

The chappie had grown suddenly sober and thoughtful. The astute young detective did not fail to notice this.

He knew that he was working progress.

So he went on:

"I'm mighty interested. Tell me all about her, Ellic. Then I'll tell you about my girl."

"Aw, so you have a girl?"

"Sure!"

"Um, well to be sure. You see she's—very petite, and—aw, she has blue eyes and pretty, yellow hair, and—er—"

"She's a real Southerner, eh?"

"Aw, no! bless me! She's a Northern girl, you bet."

"The dence you say! What's she doing in Charleston? Oh, I see! She's a summer or winter resident."

"Yas—aw, that's it."

"What's her name?"

The chappie sucked his cane.

"Aw, I say, I cannot go so far as that," he said. "She might not like it."

"Hang it! What's the odds. I'll tell you my girl's name. It is Nancey."

"Haw—haw! ain't that gay. She must be a sailor's daughter?"

"No, she's a country girl with the freedom of the field, and the light of the sky in her eyes."

"I say, man, you ought to be a poet. I'll have to tell Myrtle of that."

"Myrtle!" exclaimed Harry triumphantly. "What a pretty name. I say, I know I shall fall in love with your girl."

"If you do, you'll have to accept a challenge from me, don't you know?"

"Oh, I wouldn't mind that. A duel is my delight."

The success with which he was meeting nigh overwhelmed Harry. He was stunned.

He had not dreamed of such an easy victory. That the Myrtle spoken of by Elwood was the abducted Myrtle he had not the least doubt.

But how this vapid, light-brained youth had succeeded in carrying out such a dangerous enterprise was beyond understanding.

The young detective was about to proceed with his skilful pumping tactics, when a gruff voice sounded in their rear.

"I say, Burton, what the devil are you trying to do? If you don't quit lying you'll have to get another guardian. Apologize to that gentleman. You don't know any girl named Myrtle. The girls don't shine up to you, anyway."

The chappie turned pale.

CHAPTER III.

SOME CLEVER WORK.

Chivington it was who had spoken.

Harry turned just in time to see him give Elwood a deadly glare.

Then the gallant Southern colonel bowed politely to Harry and said:

"I know you will pardon my nephew's romancing. Elwood is a good boy, but he likes to pose as the hero of the fair sex. Is not that so, Elwood?"

"Yes, uncle," said Elwood, meekly.

The colonel now made himself exceedingly amiable to Harry.

He talked of himself and of his nephew, and told of their plantation in Carolina.

The young detective affected deep interest and gave the colonel the impression that he was wholly off the scent.

But it was the colonel who was duped.

The young detective so skilfully blinded him that when they parted the astute colonel believed that he had repaired the damage done by the thoughtless Elwood.

Then the colonel and his "Nephew" walked off and engaged in excited but low-toned argument.

The result was that the chappie kept assiduously away from Harry during the rest of the voyage.

The colonel grew grim and taciturn.

Harry told all this to Old King Brady in the privacy of their stateroom.

All doubt was settled.

"We have struck the scent, Harry."

"To a dead certainty."

"The girl spoken of by that hare-brained fellow is Myrtle Graves. She is in Charleston."

"Sure!"

"Elwood is a fool. Chivington is really the man at the bottom of it all."

"I don't think he suspects us."

"Not yet."

"Still, it will be well to keep out of his way. He will be much on his guard."

The Bradys were much elated at the point they had gained.

The course to be pursued now seemed simple, indeed.

It was simply to shadow the two crooks in Charleston and find out the hiding place of the missing girl.

That this was in or about Charleston they felt sure.

In due time the boat reached Charleston. It was to continue on to Jacksonville, but the detectives got off with Chivington and Burton.

All proceeded to the Charleston Hotel and registered.

Now the Bradys played a new card.

Old King Brady donned a clever disguise.

He made up as an old lawyer or solicitor of respectable appearance and registered as follows:

"Leonard Brown, New York City."

He managed to do this at a moment when Chivington was within hearing.

Then he leaned over the counter and asked of the clerk:

"My good man, do you know of anybody here by the name of Pete Jackson?"

The clerk looked thoughtful.

"No," he said, finally. "Nobody is here of that name."

"Well," said the pseudo lawyer. "If any one of that name calls for me, send him to my room."

"All right, sir."

Chivington had turned as if on a pivot and regarded Old King Brady keenly.

Of course, he did not penetrate the disguise and saw before him only an aged solicitor.

Old King Brady ambled away and sought a dark corner of the hotel piazza.

Through an open window he could see the interior of the office.

The very things occurred which he had expected.

Chivington walked up to the register and studied it.

Then he walked away.

"The time has come," muttered the old detective, making the signal to Harry.

Then the pseudo Leonard Brown walked tottering across the office and to the stairs.

He paused to say to the clerk:

"If anybody by the name of Pete Jackson calls to see me, send him to my room."

"All right, Mr. Brown."

Then the detective went up to the room assigned him as Leonard Brown.

He ensconced himself in an easy chair and waited.

And he did not wait in vain.

Presently there came a light tap on the door.

The detective arose and hobbled to it.

As he swung it open he saw Chivington standing before him. The colonel's dark eyes were gleaming like stars.

"Are you from New York?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Old King Brady. "Won't you come in."

Chivington entered the room. He took off his hat.

"You're Leonard Brown?"

"Yes."

"And you have come here to meet Pete Jackson?"

"Yes!"

The two men looked searchingly at each other.

"Sit down!" said Old King Brady. "You need have no fear. It's a square deal."

The colonel sat down.

"I'm not Pete Jackson," he said.

"Oh, you're not?"

"No."

The detective affected disappointment.

"That is too bad."

"But I represent him."

"Oh, well, that is all right."

"You can state your business to me."

"Well," said Old King Brady. "I represent the father of the missing girl. I have come in answer to the letter."

"And have you got ten thousand dollars with you?"

"No."

Chivington grew stiff.

"That is the only thing that will save her," he said.

"She is in a secure place and can never be rescued by any force. That is the only hope."

Old King Brady bowed.

"It is not a question of money," he said. "But of sincerity. I am delighted to come here and make sure that this is not a hoax."

"Well, it is not."

"I suppose not. But you understand! That is what I am here for."

"Exactly!" said Chivington. "Well, in what way can I prove it to you?"

"I must see the girl."

"I don't know about that."

"Very well. We shall consider it a sharp game of deception. We are not to be defrauded of the ten thousand. We must have the girl when the money is paid over."

"You'll get her," said Chivington. "Place the money in the hands of the hotel clerk subject to my order. Wait six hours and she shall be in your hands. She will walk into this hotel alone and safe."

Old King Brady reflected.

"Prove to me first that you have the girl," he said.

"Take me to where she is."

Chivington laughed jeeringly.

"Do you think I'm a fool?"

"Bah! I am a decrepit old man. Do you think I could take her by force?"

Chivington hesitated a moment.

"I'll make another proposition," he said. "Come with me, and pay the money at the spot and take the girl away with you."

"If you'll allow me to take a guard for protection, I'll do it."

Chivington dropped a curse.

"You're a lawyer," he said, rising. "You and I can do no business. Let them send some one else."

"Suppose they did and you were arrested?"

"Arrested?"

"Yes."

Chivington sneered and replied:

"Let them arrest me. That would avail nothing. I am not Pete Jackson. I had nothing to do with stealing the girl. I am her friend. I am the neutral party and the go-between. If you arrested me, you'd never get her."

Then he lowered his voice.

"But for me they'd never get her," he said. "There is a young ass in love with her. He would give his soul for her. If Jackson trades with him she will be carried away to a far part of the world and consigned to a life of slavery."

Old King Brady pretended apprehension. He nervously rubbed his hands.

"Well, well," he said. "All I want is assurance that you have the girl."

"Then you think it is a bluff?"

"It might be."

"What will convince you that it isn't?"

"I must see her."

"Look here! If I bring you word from her, a letter, or some object familiar to you, will that be enough?"

"When will you bring it?"

The colonel looked at his watch.

"It is now seven o'clock."

"Yes."

"I will bring you a letter and a lock of the girl's hair between now and ten o'clock."

CHAPTER IV.

THE COLONEL RIDES WITH A LADY.

"Very good!" said Old King Brady with alacrity. "I will accept your offer."

"All right."

Chivington arose and strode to the door. He made a low bow and was gone.

In an instant the old detective tapped on a door connecting with the next room.

The door opened.

A lady deeply veiled stood on the threshold.

She lifted the veil and showed the handsome features of Young King Brady.

"Harry," whispered Old King Brady, "did you hear all?"

"Yes."

"Follow him."

The young detective in female guise slipped out of the room. Old King Brady turned out the light in Leonard Brown's room and went into the next room, closing the door between.

He quickly changed his guise of Leonard Brown to that of the tourist, Mr. Dingley.

He then descended to the office.

He saw Chivington just crossing the piazza.

He was booted and spurred as if for a ride.

"Ah, Colonel," he cried; "do you ride in the evening?"

For a moment Chivington betrayed annoyance.

Then he smiled and said affably:

"Yes. I am going out to try a new thoroughbred. We have a fine moon, you know."

"Ah, I would like to join you if I had a horse."

"So sorry. Perhaps another time."

The colonel hastily passed out to the street.

A colored groom there held a horse in waiting.

The colonel vaulted in the saddle and galloped away. He did not notice that a lady deeply veiled galloped some distance behind him.

For some miles the colonel rode out on the road which led near the rice fields.

The night was a glorious moonlight one. In the sandy soil the horses' treads were noiseless.

And not until he heard a slight scream did the colonel realize that anyone was behind him.

He turned his head.

A well-formed lady, veiled, was trying to control a horse which she sat upon.

The animal gave frantic plunges and dashed past the colonel. He did not suspect that an irritating spur was the cause of this.

The colonel was surprised to note that the lady was unattended.

He spurred forward a little with an impulse to render any necessary assistance.

And the opportunity came.

With all her strength the lady reined in her horse, and then slipped to the ground. She held the beast by the bridle though it continued to snort and paw.

The colonel reined up.

"Pardon me, madam," he said. "Are you in trouble?"

"I am armed and I am able to defend myself," she replied. "Your voice, though, bespeaks a gentleman."

"Rest assured of that," said the colonel, as he slipped from his saddle. "I am Colonel Chivington."

"Of Charleston?"

"Yes."

"I have heard of you. But I will not detain you, colonel. My horse does not like his curb. I shall lower the rein."

"Permit me to assist you, madam. No, I protest," said

the gallant colonel. "I am a gentleman. You have nothing to fear from me."

"You are very kind," said Harry in a well-simulated feminine voice. "I live in Charleston, and am belated on my road home. I dared not keep my horse's head homeward for fear he would run away with me."

"There is always risk," said the colonel. "But do you not fear to ride alone at this hour?"

"You forget. I am armed."

"That is true, but the negroes in this vicinity are of a desperate kind. I wish I were going your way. In fact, I shall shortly turn back. I only go as far as the next house."

"Indeed," said Harry, hesitatingly.

"Yes," assured the colonel. "I have a little business call to make there. If you would not mind waiting outside a short while, I would be glad of the honor of escorting you back to the city."

"I fear that I shall put you to a great deal of trouble."

"None whatever, I assure you. It is an honor I beg."

The colonel bowed low.

His manner was gracious and even pleading.

Harry smiled with inward delight.

"I am half tempted to accept your offer," he said.

"That is enough," cried the colonel. "Allow me to assist you to the saddle."

"I do not need assistance," said Harry as he lightly mounted. "Ride ahead, Colonel Chivington. I think I can control my horse now."

And together they rode on along the lane between the canes, until suddenly the road branched and showed a house in a tangle of magnolias.

The colonel had kept up a clever conversation.

He could be a very genial beau when he chose, and this was his moment.

"Here we are," he said lightly. "You have not as yet honored me with your name."

"Miss Clinton," replied Harry, at a venture.

"What? You are not of the Goldsboro family of Clintons?"

"You may assume that much," said Harry evasively.

"Why, I am charmed. Scott Clinton was my army chum. He and I fought under Lee."

"I shall be glad to speak of you when I get back to Richmond."

"Oh, Miss Clinton, really, this is an act of Providence which has brought about this event. You are not stopping permanently in Charleston?"

"No; just on a visit."

"Ah! Then I may see more of you?"

"Perhaps so. But really, Colonel Chivington, you are forgetting your business, and Rollo is getting restless again."

"Pardon me," cried the Colonel, hastily dismounting. "I would ask you in but the people are a crabbed lot. You shall not be kept long in waiting."

"I shall not mind."

Chivington tethered his horse and dashed away through the magnolias. A light shone in the window of the house.

It was of the plantation type with double piazzas.

But there was a ramshackle air of decay peculiar to all such places since the days of the great civil war.

Harry waited only until he heard the house door close behind Chivington.

Then he leaped from his horse and crept through the magnolias.

The young detective was sure that he had at last found the hiding place of the missing girl.

He approached the house with great care.

For aught he knew it might be well guarded.

And it was well he took this precaution, for suddenly there was a rustle in the shrubbery, and two negroes passed almost within touching distance.

He could see them plainly in the moonlight.

But they could not see him, for he was in the deep shadow.

Young King Brady drew a deep breath of relief.

The window was but a few yards away.

He waited until he was sure the negroes had gone to a safe distance.

Then he crept up to the window.

The curtain was down.

But there was a narrow slit in it, and through this he saw the interior of the room.

The sight he beheld filled him with amazement.

At a table sat a colored woman. Four large negroes of a forbidding type were lounging in chairs about the room.

Chivington stood in the centre of the room.

With one hand on the table before him stood a slender young girl with fair features and the stamp of refinement.

At once Harry knew her.

It was no other than the missing girl, Myrtle Graves.

There was a light of eager expectation in the girl's eyes.

Every word uttered reached the young detective's ears.

"Now all I ask of you," the colonel was saying, "is some token which I can take to your friends. They will come here then, or you shall be taken to them, for it will be proof to them that my story is true."

"Oh, what can I send?" asked the young girl, eagerly. "I'm willing to send anything I have."

"Well, a tress of your hair, for one thing. Then you must write them a brief letter."

"I will gladly do that."

"Hurry, then," declared the colonel, "for my time is brief. I must go right back."

The young girl sank down at the table.

Then the negro woman was about to cut a bit of her silky hair with scissors, when disaster overtook Harry.

CHAPTER V.

THE CLEW FOUND IN THE DARK.

The young lady detective was intently engaged in watching the scene.

He did not suspect that danger was impending until suddenly a crunching footstep sounded in his rear.

Before he could turn there was a rustle, and sinewy fingers closed around his throat.

"Hold her, Mose. Don' yo' let her slip."

"Yo' bet I will."

"Clar fo' goodness! She am strong fo' a woman."

Harry was in the clutch of two burly negroes.

He struggled with fierce desperation. But he was choked half senseless, and then dragged toward the door.

The commotion was heard by those inside.

Instantly the door was thrown open and the other negroes rushed out.

Chivington stood in the door.

"What's the matter, you black devils?" he growled.

"Fo' de Lor', Marse Chivington, we'se done coteched some white woman peekin' in de window."

Then the colonel caught sight of Harry.

With an oath he started for the negroes.

"You black hounds!" he roared. "You dare to handle a white woman that way? I'll have your hearts for this."

Then he caught Harry's half senseless form and carried him to the light which shone through the cabin door.

And here he glanced down into the young detective's face.

Harry caught his breath and his senses came back to him with a rush.

He started up and writhed from the colonel's grasp.

As for Chivington, he stood aghast at the revelation.

Harry's hat and veil, as well as the false chignon, had fallen and revealed his masculine features.

"Devils!" yelled the astounded colonel. "It's a man!"

"Dat's what!" cried the negroes in chorus. "A man in woman's clothes."

Harry saw the danger of the situation at a glance.

He realized that only prompt action could save him.

And he acted.

Quick as a flash he made a leap for the cabin door. His purpose was to get inside and close it.

Then he would hold the fort, and if possible rescue the girl.

But, quick as he was, the colonel was quicker.

He threw himself in front of the young detective.

Harry was hurled back.

Then the negroes started to close in on him.

The young detective was not foolhardy.

He saw that the odds were too largely against him.

The best he could do was to assure his escape. He did not doubt that the kidnappers would kill him if they could.

So he leaped to the right, struck one of the coons a fearful blow and drew his pistol.

It was not Harry's purpose to kill, so he fired over the heads of the coons.

It frightened them just enough to enable him to get a start. Then he dashed into the magnolias again.

On he ran.

Presently he reached his horse. He heard his pursuers and their mad yells behind him.

"Catch him!" roared Chivington. "Kill him! Don't let him get away."

But they were too late.

Harry vaulted into the saddle. There was but one thing for him to do.

He must ride back to Charleston the quickest way and get assistance. He certainly could not rescue the fair prisoner alone.

He knew no other plan.

So he forced his horse to the utmost.

And an hour later, when he pulled up at the door of the Charleston Hotel, the few guests on the piazza at that hour were startled.

Old King Brady was one of them.

The young detective tumbled out of the saddle.

"Hurry!" he shouted. "Get all the help you can. Follow me!"

He tore the female garb off and stood revealed in his own clothes.

"Harry," cried Old King Brady, "have you got the scent?"

"Yes, and the game is ours if we can get there in time."

Hastily Harry told his story.

The result was prompt action, or at least as prompt as possible.

Old King Brady had no trouble in at once procuring a horse.

But it was another thing to start the Charleston police out of their quarters at that hour.

However, a posse was obtained, and all set out at full speed for the plantation house.

"It's Lem Steele's old place," said one of the officers.

"It's gone to decay, an' been given up to niggers."

"Ah!" said Old King Brady. "Well, I only hope we can get there in time."

It was, however, long after midnight when they rode up with a clatter to the Steele house.

It was quite dark.

No light now shone in the window.

"We might have expected it," said Old King Brady.

"They would have been fools to wait here for us."

"That's so," agreed Harry. "They have slipped us."

"For a sure thing."

All that was possible was done.

The house was entered and searched from end to end. Not the slightest clew was found.

There was no houses near, nor neighbors to give a clew to the direction taken by the flying party.

All that could be done was to wait until morning, and try to trail the footprints in the road.

But drops of rain were in the air, and soon a pouring rain was obliterating all possible trail.

The Bradys were disappointed.

After all their brilliant detective work they were foiled.

The mask was off, and the kidnappers on their guard would be harder than ever to trap.

"We ought to have brought a force out here," said Old King Brady. "It's our mistake, partner."

"You are right," agreed Harry. "But we'll catch them yet. We know our men."

"What is more, these niggers will furnish a clew. I would know the wench they called Dinah anywhere in the world. They have slipped to some other point. But we will track them down."

This, however, was destined to prove a harder job than the young detective had reckoned upon.

Discomfitted they returned to Charleston.

For days they scoured the region about and sought everywhere. But Chivington and Burton, as well as the negroes, had vanished.

Where had they gone?

This was the question.

It remained for Harry to find the clew, and it was found in the dark.

While struggling with the negroes Harry's hand had clutched an object at the throat of one of them.

It had been suspended by a greasy ribbon about the fellow's neck.

The young detective instinctively hung on to the object. Just why he never knew, but impulse made him hold onto it until far on his way to Charleston.

Then he thrust it into his pocket. It was a week before he chanced to come across it by accident.

Then he fished out of his pocket one of the most curious objects he had ever seen.

It was a cross between a monkey and a kangaroo, and carved out of some unknown wood.

The young detective realized its value.

It was a voodoo charm.

The negro who lost it would be like a chicken without a head until he should recover it.

So powerful is the superstition of the blacks in regard to the potency of the voodoo charm that they will go to any extreme before sacrificing one.

And Harry knew in a moment the value of the curious bit of roughly carved wood.

He showed it to Old King Brady, and told how he got it.

"That will be the means of running the kidnappers to earth," cried the old detective. "If we can find that coon we can make him do anything we choose."

This was true.

The detectives now began to work among the negroes.

But it did not take them long to discover that they had no light task before them.

The negro crook is the shrewdest of crooks, and the class hang closely together.

The two white men were received with distrust and even coldness.

Several days passed in this way. Old King Brady saw all the difficulties of the matter, and finally said:

"It's no use, Harry, we can't do anything personally with these crooks. But there is another way."

"What is it?" asked the young detective with interest.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CAPTURE OF BURTON.

"Well," said Old King Brady slowly, "we failed to catch Chivington at the plantation house."

"Yes."

"It was there that you tore the voodoo charm from the neck of the negro you were struggling with. Now the whole gang with the missing girl have decamped for some other point."

That is true."

"If we are to accomplish anything through the voodoo we must locate the negro who lost it, or at least get word to him."

"Yes."

"We have failed to that through direct intercourse with the black clique. Now I have another plan. We will advertise the voodoo in all the Southern newspapers. He may see it and communicate with us."

"Capital!" cried Harry. "That is certainly our game."

So the Bradys proceeded to insert an advertisement in the Charleston, Savannah and Jacksonville newspapers.

"To the colored man who has lost a voodoo charm: He can secure the same by communication with B., Charleston Hotel, Charleston, N. C."

Four days later the detectives reaped the fruit of their effort.

A letter written in a coarse hand came to the hotel addressed to "B." Thus it read:

"Dear Sur:—If you has the charm I lost I will du yoo a good turn if yoo will send it to Pete Jackson, Wekiva, Florida. Yours truly, P. Jackson."

It is hardly necessary to say that the Bradys were delighted. They had the scent again.

Of this they felt sure.

For the letter was postmarked at Wekiva, and there was no doubt but that the writer was at that place.

Also that he was the negro whom Harry had secured the charm from that dark night at the plantation house.

In that case it was easy to assume that the kidnappers and the missing girl were in Florida.

"There's the lead," declared Old King Brady, confidently. "They left here for Florida, and it was not a bad plan, either, for there are plenty of hiding places in the woods and swamps down there."

So sure were the Bradys of this that they decided to leave for Florida at once.

"We need only find Pete Jackson," said Harry.

"The rest will be easy."

"Yes."

The Bradys settled their bill at the Charleston Hotel, and at once took a Jacksonville express.

They were soon bowling away across South Carolina and Georgia.

In due time they reached Jacksonville, and at once took a train on the Jacksonville, Tampa & Key West Railroad for Sanford.

It was evening when they alighted in this little Florida town, and they decided to go no further that night.

So they proceeded to the Sanford House and registered. Just as they were turning from the counter Harry gave a sharp start.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed.

Old King Brady glanced at him.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Look yonder."

The old detective's gaze traveled to the far end of the room where a number of guests sat engaged in reading newspapers.

One of these men was at once recognized by Old King Brady.

"Whew!" he said softly. "There is one of our birds now."

The "chappie" seemed deeply engrossed and did not heed the detectives.

It did not take Old King Brady long to decide what to do.

He walked boldly up to Burton and said curtly:

"Hello, Burton! What has brought you to Florida?"

"Bless me heart!" gasped the chappie, starting up. "Wheah did you come fwom?"

"Old King Brady smiled.

"From Charleston," he said.

It took Burton but a few seconds to regain his composure. Then his inherent cunning came back.

"Fo' Gawd's sake!" he exclaimed. "Are you in consumption, too? Dweadful thing! Everybody down here has a cough, and it jars me nerves."

"Ah," said the detective quietly. "I suppose that is what brought you down here?"

Burton coughed in a hollow way.

"Distressing state of me lungs," he declared. "I hope this Florida air will cure me."

"No doubt it will cure you of one habit."

"Eh? I don't understand."

"Well, the habit of kidnapping young girls."

Elwood's face turned sickly green. Fear showed in its every line.

"Weally, you have the advantage of me, don't you know. I don't see the point of your joke."

"You don't, eh? Well, you'll feel it before long. Where is Chivington?"

"Who?"

"Colonel Jack Chivington."

"Oh, you mean the man from Richmond whom we met on the steamer?"

"I mean your friend and pal."

Burton shook his head.

"You are mistaken," he said. "He was never my pal."

"Do you mean to say that you don't know where he is?"

"To be sure."

"Look here, Burton," said the old detective sternly.

"We have got plenty of evidence against you to put you behind the bars. You know that we are bound to find the missing girl. You know where she is. Now you must tell us or up you go."

Burton was terribly frightened.

He trembled violently and turned very pale.

"I—I don't know where she is," he protested.

"Yes you do!" declared the old detective.

"I swear it, on my honor."

"Come, that will not do. We must know the truth. If you do not tell at once we shall place you under arrest."

Old King Brady produced a pair of steel handcuffs.

At sight of them the dude broke down completely.

"Oh, for Gawd's sake, don't arrest me," he pleaded. "I'll do anything you say. I'll try and find Chivington for you."

"You know where he is."

"No, no! I don't know where he is. But—I—I——"

"You have an idea?"

"Y—yes, that's it. I have an idea. Perhaps I can find him."

"Now, why not admit that you know?"

"Because I don't," protested Burton. "That is the truth. I swear it. W—we differed, and—I'll tell you the whole story if you agree to one thing."

The detectives were interested.

"What?" asked Old King Brady.

"The promise that I shall not be prosecuted for kidnapping."

The two detectives exchanged glances. For a moment Old King Brady was silent and thoughtful.

Then he said:

"Burton, it shall be so. Give us the whole story, and help us to capture the villain Chivington, and you shall go free and unpunished."

A light of relief shone in Burton's eyes.

"Let us go somewhere," he said. "Have you a room here?"

"Yes."

The Bradys led the way to their room. There they were seated.

"I will tell you the whole story," said Burton. "Of course, I shall not try to defend my course, for I have done wrong, though it was by Chivington's advice."

"I was deeply in love with Miss Graves. I know she is a mere girl, don't you know, but I loved her. She rejected my suit. I was desperate."

"I told Chivington all about it, and he said I was a fool not to steal her. He said it would be the easiest job in the world. She would come to terms easy enough, and all would be mine."

"So we laid the plan to kidnap her and brought her to Charleston. You followed us, and we had to get out of that locality. So we started for Florida."

"Chivington sent Aunt Dinah, Jackson and Close, two other blacks, with her to Wekiva. We came on together, and at Jacksonville he got a letter from the girl's father in New York. It seems he had written to Graves offering to give up the girl for a reward of fifty thousand dollars."

"That made me mad and we had a stiff quarrel. He knocked me down and cleared out. I came down here and have been trying to locate the gang. I'm sick of the whole job, and all I want is to get square with Chivington and get the girl out of his hands. There's the story."

The Bradys had listened with much interest.

They saw that Burton was telling the truth.

It was easy enough to understand that Chivington was just the sort of a man to undertake that kind of a job.

No sense of loyalty to Burton would detain him.

So Old King Brady said:

"Burton, you have been made a fool of. This Chivington is going to feather his own nest. He does not consider you."

"I know that," agreed the dude. "And you can see my position."

"We do."

"I don't know where he is, or the girl either, any more than you."

"Do you know where Wekiva is?"

"There is a small tributary to the St. Johns River below here which is called the Wekiva River."

"That is the place," said Harry. "Probably it is a negro settlement."

"Yes," agreed Burton. "I am sure that is what it is."

"Enough," said Old King Brady. "In the morning we will start for Wekiva."

CHAPTER VII.

THE WOODMEN.

While the Bradys had no reason to doubt the sincerity of Burton, yet they deemed it best to keep him under surveillance.

So it was proposed that he should occupy the same room with the detectives.

This had two beds in it, so the matter was easy. Burton readily agreed to this.

But the dude did not seem at all disposed to try and escape. He appeared perfectly sincere.

The next morning the question of the trip to Wekiva was discussed.

There were two ways of reaching the place.

One was overland through the pine lands and swamps. The other was by means of the river.

To proceed overland meant a hard journey through hot sands and deep swamps.

So after some consultation it was decided to procure a boat and journey down the river.

It did not take the Bradys long to find a small rowboat, which they purchased for a small sum.

Then they procured some supplies and were ready for the trip.

They were not blind to the fact that there was no little risk to their undertaking.

So they procured rifles and ammunition, for a running fight in the Everglades was a possibility.

Burton could give them but little advice.

"Weally," he said; "I know but little about Florida, don't you know. I think it's a beastly country, anyway."

"All right," agreed Old King Brady. "It is enough for us to know that our birds are at Wekiva. We will use you when we get there."

"What do you mean?" asked the chappie.

"Why, we may send you into the enemies' camp to play the part of spy."

Burton's face paled.

"Egad!" he exclaimed. "Perhaps Chivington will kill me."

"I thought you were friends?"

"Not now. Didn't I tell you he had thrown me over?"

The old detective was now well satisfied of the dude's sincerity. There was no doubt but that he was really out with Chivington, as he had claimed.

However, the boat was got ready and the start made.

Down the river they proceeded until they reached the mouth of the Wekiva.

This is a small river which flows some miles through a mighty tract of swamp.

It rises in a huge basin fed by enormous gushing springs. These are called the Blue Springs.

The Wekiva is a typical river of the Everglades.

Great festoons of vines and climbers arch overhead from cypress trees, and Spanish moss hangs from the branches in great profusion.

In places it is impossible to locate the channel with the eye, for it was often choked for many hundred yards with a peculiar species of aquatic plant known as water-lettuce.

This is essentially a water plant, finding no root in the soil, and living entirely on the elements of nutrition to be found in the water.

The current drifts these curious little plants floating on the water, and resembling heads of lettuce, hither and thither, and sometimes the entire channel is hidden from shore to shore.

Across this treacherous green bridge the water spider or the yellow moccasin snake glide with sinuous ease.

Overhead flocks of ducks go swiftly on their way. The white crow, the blue heron and the kingfisher sit on the gnarled and dead branches of some giant cypress.

Such was the scenery along the Wekiva.

Forests of cypress growing out of the swamp extended on either side.

At night the deer came down to the river's edge to drink. There, attracted by the lantern in the bow of the boat, they would remain an easy target for a would-be hunter.

Into these wilds the detectives with Burton made their way.

At night they anchored the boat and slept on the thwarts in preference to attempting a camp in the swamp.

The next morning they started again on their way. It was slow and laborious work with the oars.

But they were getting deeper into the wilds every hour

Suddenly as the boat swung around a bend in the narrow stream the voyagers were given a start.

Moored to the banks was a flatboat.

On it stood several negroes and a couple of white men.

The latter were of the Southern type, with loose-fitting clothes and palm-leaf hats.

They were engaged in getting out cypress logs, from which an expensive grade of shingle is made.

The negroes were doing the work and the white men were overseeing the job.

As the rowboat came in sight, all turned to stare at the newcomers.

"Hello!" exclaimed Burton. "Heah are some of the natives, baw Jove! Maybe they can give us a tip, don't you know."

The two white overseers came to the edge of the scow and regarded the voyagers with interest.

"Hello, strangers," said one of them. "Whar be ye goin'?"

"See any black duck around these parts?" asked Old King Brady.

"Heaps of 'em up around the lagoon, or about ther Springs."

"Ah! How far is it to the Springs?"

"I reckon it's four miles."

"Thanks!"

"Jest cum up from Sanford?"

"Yes."

"Doin' a bit of huntin', eh?"

"Yes, we're after game," said Old King Brady, without being specific. The Southerner squinted at the detective quizzically.

The boat lay alongside the scow. The Bradys rested on their oars.

"You Northerners hev a durned easy time of it, don't ye?" said the second white man. "Ef ye hed ter work like we'uns ye wouldn't hev such smooth hands an' faces."

"I'll wager you don't begin to work so hard as we do," said Old King Brady.

The two crackers looked at each other and laughed.

One of them defiled the river water with a mouthful of tobacco juice.

"We don't, eh? Waal, jest git up hyer an' try yer hand at diggin' out cypress logs, an' we'll show ye what work is."

"Is that what you are doing?"

"Certainly."

"And what are your negroes doing?"

This was a hard shot. Anger showed in the faces of the two Southerners.

"Don't git sassy, Yank," said one of them. "Yew know what we mean."

"Why don't you say what you mean, then?" said the old detective bluntly. "You say you work harder than we do. I can't see that you are doing anything but bossing those negroes."

"Is that so? Well, thet's harder work than you think. At any rate, it's more like work than pulling a boat up from Sanford to shoot ducks."

"Well, maybe it is," said Old King Brady in a conciliatory tone. "But we had to work to get the wherewithal to enjoy a position of leisure."

"Like enough," agreed the two overseers. "What's ther news down ter Sanford?"

"Nothing much."

"Down here fer sport, are ye?"

"Yes."

"Wanter buy an orange grove?"

"Are there many hereabouts?"

"Quite a few back from ther river. Ye know Wekiva is right in the orange belt."

"And Wekiva is four miles from here?"

"About thet."

"Is there a hotel there?"

"Oh, yes. The Clay Springs Hotel, a right smart one. We're gittin' out cypress fer ther Pierce an' Torrey Company, and they own about everything hereabouts. They've jest finished their branch railroad up to Apopka to connect with the T. & G. road."

"T. & G.?" said Old King Brady. "What road is that?"

"The Taveres & Gulf. I reckon you're all strangers hereabouts."

"Yes. Do many hunters come into this region?"

"Oh, yes; quite a few."

"Have any been here lately?"

The two Southerners exchanged glances.

"Waal, now you speak of it, I reckon there is a stranger over at Wekiva; but he's no Yank. I know him to be as good a reb as ever fit under General Lee."

"It isn't Colonel Chivington?"

"That's his name. Do you know the Colonel?"

"Well, we ought to," said Old King Brady. "We came down on the same steamer with him."

"Hang it all, then ye're all right. Come aboard! Hain't got nothin' but a leetle corn whisky, but 'ere welcome, jest the same."

The detectives saw that here was a point to be gained.

So they gave Burton a significant glance, and Harry pushed the boat up to the scow.

The painter rope was secured to the scow, and they all three clambered aboard.

Tom Scott and Jeff Wiley, the names the two overseers gave, proceeded to show their Southern hospitality.

The negroes were left with the cypress logs, and all five white men crossed a little plank to the shore.

They took a path through the live oak, and in a few moments came to a rude shanty.

Here stools were brought out, together with a jug of whisky and some meal cakes and yams. In a short while quite a repast was placed before the Bradys.

CHAPTER VIII.

A TRAGEDY.

It is hardly necessary to say that the repast was exceedingly relished by our adventurers.

They ate heartily and did all they could to fraternize with Scott and Wiley.

"I tell ye," said the latter, "any friend of Jack Chivington is a friend of mine. There's nuthin' too good fer Jack, an' there's nuthin' too good fer his friends."

Burton caught Old King Brady's eye and for a moment there was danger of an explosion.

But both controlled themselves and Old King Brady said:

"We are going to look Jack up when we get to Wekiva."

"If ye do, jest tell him that ye met Jeff Wiley."

"I'll do it."

"Ye won't go no further to-night?"

"Yes. We must go on to Wekiva."

"That's too bad. We'll make it agreeable fer ye here, and show ye how to bag some ducks easily to-morrow morning."

"We'll stop on our return," said Old King Brady.

"Ye kaint stay now, then?"

"I'm afraid not!"

"Wall, we ain't fer detainin' ye. Hyars ter yer good luck once more."

Again the jug of corn whisky was requisitioned. The detectives pretended to drink with great gusto.

Burton through all had been extremely silent.

He sat looking out through the door into the live oak growth.

Suddenly he gave a gasp and his face turned ghostly white. His eyes dilated with terror.

Harry noted this and got between him and the two Southerners, so that they could not observe.

Then he whispered:

"What's the matter with you, Burton?"

"I saw a face in the bushes out yonder," replied the chappie, in trembling tones. "It gave me an awful shoek, for it was the face of the man, I fear, Jack Chivington."

Harry was thrilled.

"Chivington," he gasped. "And here? Are you sure?"

"I'll take my oath."

The young detective's gaze wandered in the same direction. He also gave a stare.

There in the shrubbery he certainly saw the outlines of a human face. Terrible eyes flashed like those of a wild animal.

Then a fearful thing happened.

Burton started to rise. He was the picture of abject terror.

But a streak of flame leaped from the green shrubbery, there was a crashing report, Burton gave a hoarse groan and pitched forward on his face.

What followed was exciting.

Harry made a side leap away from the door to avoid a second shot. Old King Brady turned aghast with horror to see Burton lying face downward and blood spurting from his neck.

The two overseers Scott and Wiley had seized rifles from pegs on the wall, and instantly started for the door.

"Who fired that shot?"

"Whars ther dog that killed that man? He was my gnest."

But the assassin had no intention of concealing his identity in flight.

The shrubbery parted, and a tall man with revolver in hand stepped forth.

It was Chivington.

His face was contorted with the blackest of fury.

"Jack!" called out Wiley. "Bless my heart! What's all this? Did you shoot that chap?"

"Yes, I did," replied Chivington. "An' I had a right to, Jeff. I came up jest in the right time. He was leading those two watch-dogs of the law down upon me, and my friends. I mean those two chaps in there. They're New York detectives, an' they're hunting me like hounds."

Scott and Wiley turned and gazed darkly at the Bradys.

"Then they've fooled us."

"They talked fair enough a little while ago."

"That's their game!" declared Chivington. "They want to hang me for something of which I'm not guilty."

The faces of the two overseers were hard as steel. Their eyes shone sullenly.

They raised the hammers of their rifles.

Old King Brady stepped forward.

"Yes," he said, plainly, "we are New York detectives, gentlemen, and we are after Mr. Chivington. He has abducted a young girl from New York City and is holding her for a ransom. But now the charge against him is a greater one. It is that of murder."

Scott and Wiley looked at Chivington, who was white with rage.

"The killing of Burton was justifiable," he said. "He led you to betray me."

"He did nothing of the kind, for he did not know more than me whether you were here or not," said Old King Brady. "The killing of this man was not warranted."

"The cursed sap-head!" gritted Chivington. "He's better off."

"That does not remove the awful charge against you of a black murder," said the old detective. "We demand that you surrender to the law."

Chivington laughed jeeringly.

"That is a good bluff," he said, "but it won't work. You must think I am easy. Do you think you can take me from this part of the country alive? Well, you had better try it. I have hundreds of friends here who will believe my story and resist any attempt you may make to arrest me."

Wiley and Scott stepped forward.

"That's right, Jack," they said.

"What sort of a region is this?" asked Old King Brady. "Is there no law hereabouts? Will you two men defend a murderer?"

"It was a justifiable killing," declared Chivington.

"We'll take yer word for it, Jack," declared the overseers.

The Bradys saw that here was a situation which might

prove serious, so they began to mentally figure up their own chances.

For should these desperadoes decide to make prisoners of them a fight must result, and the odds were against the Bradys.

It was a question as to what was the best course to pursue.

"Then you refuse to surrender?" asked Old King Brady.

Chivington laughed in a hard, sardonic way.

"You must think I am a fool?" he said, contemptuously.

"What is there to compel me to surrender?"

"This," said Old King Brady, raising a revolver in his right hand. "We are officers of the law, and we must do our duty."

Chivington glanced at Scott and Wiley.

"To fire upon me means death to you," he said coolly.

"Do you see?"

Both Scott and Wiley covered the detectives with their rifles. It was a thrilling moment.

"Tell your friends to lower their weapons or I'll shoot you dead!"

"Lower yours first," cried Scott. "If you fire on Chivington we'll bore you full of holes."

"Hold on!" cried Harry. "This is not policy for either side. We don't want the life of any of you. We are officers of the law and must make all reasonable attempt to do our duty."

"You see it is impossible in this case," said Scott.

"So it seems."

"Now you're talking sense," said Chivington. "I don't want your lives. I killed this skunk because he betrayed me. That was all."

"Then," said Old King Brady, "we'll call it a draw."

"That's all right."

"But we warn you that we shall not abandon the attempt to bring you to justice."

For a moment Chivington's face was black.

The murderous light had again come into his eyes. But Scott cried carelessly.

"Let him boast, partner! He is talking through his hat. He can't do you any harm."

"I don't believe he can," said Chivington.

"In course he can't. Why, if he don't git out of this locality in twenty-four hours we'll hunt him out. I reckon he'll go to stay then."

Old King Brady smiled grimly.

But his fingers rested lightly on the trigger of his revolver, and he kept a sharp eye on Chivington.

He made a signal to Harry to leave the hut.

The young detective walked out. The villain made no objection.

Then Old King Brady did the same. The three villains watched the detectives closely.

"We shall meet again in the near future," said Old King Brady. "Be assured of that, Mr. Chivington."

Chivington stepped out of the cabin.

"Look here, my friend," he said, quietly, "you are taking the wisest course. You know you can't arrest me here. Now

you had better go back to New York and take up a new case. You can't convict me of murder in any court in Florida. As for the girl, she's where you can't trouble her. When I get ready I'll see she gets back to her father all safe. You can't hurry it up nor do anything to spoil my plans. So ye can jest save yourselves further trouble an' go home. That's my honest advice."

"All right, Colonel Chivington," said Harry, lightly. "You hold the high card just now. Of course, we shall have to accept your advice."

"That's the sensible way ter do," said Scott. "We'll send a nigger with ye ter show ye ther way back to Sanford, if ye wish."

"No, I thank you," said Old King Brady, with a bland smile. "We can find our way all right."

"Well, good-day to ye."

"Good-day!"

The detectives walked slowly down the path to the scow. They saw the negroes yet at work there. They leaped into the row-boat.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE RIVER.

Old King Brady cast off the painter and Harry shoved the boat out.

They allowed it to drop down in the current.

Soon a bend hid them from the view of those on the scow.

Then Old King Brady turned the prow of the boat into a leafy covert under the bank.

Here the boat was allowed to rest and the two detectives looked at each other.

Old King Brady was very grim.

"The foulest murder I ever heard of," he said. "It was done in cold blood."

"That is the plain truth," agreed Harry. "But we were lucky not to have been held up by those rascals."

"That is so. They had the best of us."

"They have made a mistake in letting us out of the trap."

"They will discover that in due time."

"Indeed they will."

Thus the two detectives philosophized. They had no idea of going back to Sanford and giving up the case.

That was the thing furthest removed from their minds. There was but one course before them.

They knew well enough the peril of their undertaking.

They knew that this was a lawless part of the State where criminals might find protection in the sentiments of a friendly community.

There was no doubt that Chivington could claim the friendship and support of all in the region.

Burton had been a Northerner, and it was easy for Chivington to make it appear that he was hunted by Burton for his life and had acted in pure self defence.

In this region ideas of justice were lax, and founded wholly on sentiment.

So the position of the Bradys may be appreciated.

If they remained in the vicinity and the fact was discovered Chivington's story would be believed and they would become fugitives.

But this fact and the awful risk it implied did not for a moment alter their determination.

They were determined to await the coming of darkness, and then push on up the river to Clay Springs.

There they would perfect a disguise and do some clever work as shadows.

They were sure that Myrtle Graves was somewhere held a captive in Wekiva.

Then much was expected of the voodoo charm, the clew found in the dark.

Among the negroes this would be a potent means of influence.

So altogether the Bradys were not disposed to look upon the case as lost.

They drew the boat far up in the network of green vines and shrubs, which overhung the bank.

Presently the swirling water lettuce was drawn into the little channel and covered their tracks. A green surface extended to the centre channel of the stream.

The detectives had provisions aboard the boat and now proceeded to make themselves comfortable.

They were careful to make but little noise.

They discussed the case in all its phases.

"There was no saving Burton," said Harry. "I am sorry I did not see the purpose of Chivington in time."

"So am I. Of course, Burton was the scamp who planned the abduction in the first place and really liable for all the trouble."

"So he was."

"Yet, I didn't want to see him murdered."

"Especially in so cowardly a way."

"Just so."

"It shows Chivington to be a rank coward. Why didn't he first accuse Burton?"

"Oh, you may be sure there was another reason than the one he gave for killing his man. He no doubt wanted Burton out of the way, on account of the reward."

"Yes."

"You see, Graves may be sure of getting his daughter back now by paying the price asked."

"Just so."

"But if he does not pay it before we can get hold of her, he will be saved that much."

"That is what we must try to do. If Chivington gets the money we will never catch him. He will decamp for some far land."

"I believe you."

Thus the Bradys conversed in low tones.

But suddenly they ceased. A startling sound came to the hearing of both.

Human voices were heard, and then the splash of oars.

The detectives exchanged glances and Harry whispered:

"Can it be they are after us?"

"Be careful. Let us investigate."

Gently Old King Brady parted the leafy screen and looked out from their covert.

The sight, which the detectives beheld, was one of deep interest to them.

Down the river current a boat was being rowed.

Four men were in it.

Two at the oars were negroes. The other two sat in the stern. The detectives recognized them as Wiley and Chivington.

They were looking ahead down the river, and as they drew nearer, every word they uttered was plainly heard.

"I don't see nothin' of 'em," said Wiley. "I reckon they're well on their way to Sanford."

"I think we'd better go down a mile or so, and make sure," said Chivington. "I tell you they're cunning devils. You can't tell what they'll do."

"They won't hardly dare to stay around here. It'll be death for 'em if they do."

"You don't know what they'll do. They are the cleverest detectives in the country."

"Why didn't ye say so, and we'd have had two more funerals up at the camp."

"Well, I thought it would be risky. Then I'd rather they would go home and tell the story."

"Well, if any of us get a bead on 'em again you can bet it will be their finish."

The boat passed on around a bend.

It need hardly be said that the Bradys had been deeply interested.

They looked at each other and smiled.

"Wouldn't they be surprised if they knew where we were all the while?" said Harry.

"Well, they will never find us here."

"Of course not."

"When darkness comes we shall be all right."

An hour passed.

Then once more the sound of the oars was heard. It was the boat returning.

It passed silently by this time, the occupants not making speech. The detectives remained quiet.

Then the day began to wane. The Bradys now took advantage of the last of the daylight to make a change in their personal appearance.

They quickly donned a disguise, which was as near that of the Southerner as possible.

They knew the twang and eccentricities of Southern speech and did not fear being discovered.

"We will fool somebody," said Old King Brady, confidently. "You may be sure of that."

"We will try it."

Soon darkness settled down.

In the everglades there is no twilight. With the sinking of the sun comes immediate darkness.

So almost before they could realize it the detectives found themselves in absolute darkness.

That is, it was dark as a pocket in their retreat.

But outside the stars gave some light, and it was not hard to see their way on the river.

The Bradys were inclined to stick to their boat and the river.

They had no idea of trusting to a random course through the swamp or the higher ground beyond, a region with which they were wholly unfamiliar.

They knew that by following the river to its source they must reach Clay Springs, and this was their objective point.

They waited until at least two hours had passed.

Then they pushed the boat out into the current.

They gave way at the oars and rowed as silently as possible.

They rounded the bend and saw the black form of the scow dead ahead.

For a moment they half ceased rowing, wondering if there was anybody on the deck.

They rowed softly alongside. No person was to be seen and all was as silent as the grave.

If anyone was aboard they gave no sign of their presence. Some distance beyond the Bradys rested on their oars and listened.

But nothing could be seen or heard.

"It's all right," said Harry. "We have passed the danger point. Now all is clear ahead."

So it seemed.

They rowed on now without reserve. The distance of four miles against the current was not a light one to overcome. But they kept on.

It seemed hours until suddenly the river began to widen.

The boat glided into a great silent, open pool. The outlines of a pavilion were seen on the shore.

The everglades here gave way to the pines.

Sandy hills rose from the banks of the great Clay Springs and the stars were mirrored in their lucid depths.

The detectives forced the bow of the boat high up on the beach and leaped out.

They could distinguish little in the starlight, but they were still sure of the locality.

CHAPTER X.

TRACED BY THE VODOO.

The detectives knew that Clay Springs was a health resort as well as a pleasure ground.

People came from miles about to drink the medicinal waters. Others to bathe in the limpid pool, or to hunt and fish along the river.

A hotel stood in the forest some distance back.

The Bradys had made up their minds just what to do.

They would go up to the hotel and register for the night.

They could easily pass as Floridians from some distant part of the State, and thus avoid attention.

All the while they could be looking up their birds, and perhaps succeed in locating the missing girl.

So they made their way slowly up the roadway through the pines. The distant whistle of a locomotive was heard.

It seemed that a small branch railroad, used largely for the transportation of lumber, extended to the Springs.

At night a single coach brought down passengers from the Tavares & Gulf road in Apopka. Many tourists or woodsmen availed themselves of this chance.

The Bradys hit upon it as a happy chance.

"At the hotel they'll think we came down on that train," said Harry. "It's our chance, partner."

"You're right."

The Bradys mingled with the small crowd at the station when the train came in.

They then walked into the hotel and asked for a room. The clerk swung the register about.

"William Bailey.

"Andrew Dennis.

"Orlando, Fla."

Thus they registered. The clerk glanced carelessly at the names, and called "Front!" Then a bell-boy showed them to their room.

The Bradys did not linger there very long.

They proceeded at once to the office, and at once made themselves at home.

They saw with relief that they attracted very little attention.

The house was filled with tourists and sportsmen. The Bradys sat down in a corner and watched the throng.

Suddenly Harry clutched Old King Brady.

"Look!" he whispered. "Over by the door."

Old King Brady saw a familiar figure. It was Colonel Chivington.

He was dressed unusually fine, and made quite a conspicuous figure as he walked across the office.

He looked about him in a lordly way, glanced idly at the Bradys, and then fell to studying the ladies who were near him.

The detectives watched him with interest.

"He does not suspect us."

"No."

"We must keep a close watch on him."

Just then an incident occurred which gave the detectives their cue for the evening's work.

The tinkling of a banjo was heard outside, and then the voices of negroes rose on the air.

A plantation melody was sung with such effect that the guests of the hotel were interested.

Someone cried:

"Call them in."

At once several energetic ones started to carry out this suggestion. As a result, a strapping negro with a banjo entered, followed by a negress of prepossessing appearance.

They stood in the centre of the office and began to play and sing.

The negress had a fine voice, and earned merited applause.

For some while they furnished amusement for the crowd.

The detectives watched the scene with interest.

Then they saw that Chivington had fixed his gaze on the tall negro. The detective fancied they saw a significant glance pass between them.

"Chivington knows them," said Harry. "Did you see that?"

"Why, yes. I wonder if they can be of his gang?"

Then the old detective drew forth the voodoo charm.

Chivington at this moment walked out of the hotel and disappeared. Harry had arisen.

"Hold on," said Old King Brady. "It's of no use to follow him. I know of a better plan."

"What is it?"

"Wait and see."

After a time the guests seemed to tire of the negro melodies.

Then they turned to leave the office. The negress passed near Old King Brady.

The old detective caught her eye, and idly turned the voodoo charm on his finger.

The woman's eyes rolled, and she gave a fearful start. No doubt she would have turned pale had that been possible.

It was certain that she turned to her companion and told him.

The effect upon him was at once perceptible. He turned and shot a glance at the Bradys, trembling like a leaf.

They passed out into the night, and Old King Brady said:

"They are ours."

"Did they see the voodoo?"

"Yes."

"That is good. We will be sure to hear from them."

"You are right we will."

The Bradys now lit cigars and smoked a while leisurely. Finally they arose and sauntered out of the hotel.

They proceeded along the board walk to the railroad platform.

They then turned and walked along this to the end.

They were now in deep shadow, and no person was in sight. It was an out-of-the-way spot.

The detectives were well assured that they would hear from the negro who had played the banjo.

They had given him the very opportunity for which he would be looking.

They were not disappointed.

There was a rustling sound in the gloom, and a tall figure loomed up before them.

"Eh? Who the deuce are you?" demanded Old King Brady.

"I begs you pabdom gentlemen," said a voice. "I'se de colored man dat played de banjo in de hotel."

"Well, what do you want? We gave you some money for it."

"I knows dat, massa, but dere's one fing a brack man cares mo' fo' dan money."

"What is that?"

The negro bowed low.

"Yo' knows well enuff. Yo' has it now."

"Ah! Probably you mean that heathenish bit of wood which I had in my hand."

"Oh, sah! Dat am a very precious fing to de colored people. I'se de nigger dat los' dat charm. I axes yo' to please gib it back to me."

"You lost it?"

"Yes, sah."

"Where did you lose it?"

"Up in Norf Car'lina, sah. I'se had no luck eber since."

"How did you lose it?"

"Dat I dunno, massa. I done lost it. Dat was all."

"How do you know it belongs to you? There was a fellow, Peter Jackson, wrote to me about it."

"Oh, I'se de man, sah! I'se Pete Jackson!" cried the negro eagerly.

"Oh, you are?"

"Yes, sah."

"Where do you live?"

"Out yere on de Apopka road, sah. I done tole yo' de troof. I'se de man de charm belongs to."

"Look here, Jackson, you shall have your charm if you'll come up here to-morrow and agree to do me a certain favor."

"Oh, I'se de coon to do dat, massa," cried the negro eagerly.

"All right. Now, be off. Remember and get around to-morrow."

"All right, sah."

Jackson slid away into the gloom. Harry was puzzled.

"I say, partner," he said; "why didn't you make terms with him?"

"Because it would have been no use."

"Don't you think so?"

"No."

"Well, that is queer. What shall we do?"

"Just what he is going to do now."

"What?"

"Go down to the cabin on the Apopka road."

Harry saw the point.

"Are you armed?" he asked. "I have a revolver."

"That's enough. Let us go along."

The two detectives set forth. They used extreme caution.

They knew that Jackson was ahead of them, and they did not want to overtake him.

They felt sure that the missing girl was in the care of the old negress whose name was Dinah.

There was no reason to doubt that she was in the negro cabin, and it was a propitious moment for the Bradys to act.

And they were resolved to do so.

The detectives followed the road with some difficulty.

The Southern roads are not fenced, and are defined solely by the wheelmarks in the sand. The darkness made it difficult to tell where these marks were.

But after a long while they saw a distant star of light.

That it came from the window of a habitation was soon made evident. A few moments later the Bradys were close to the cabin.

The sound of voices in excited tones could be heard within. Then the Bradys heard a sound which gave them a thrill.

It was the voice of a young girl raised in appeal.

"There she is," declared Old King Brady. "We have found the missing girl. She is in that cabin."

"Then our duty is plain," said Harry.

"Yes," declared the old detective, with which he walked up to the door.

CHAPTER XI.

A FUTILE ARREST.

Old King Brady did not use ceremony. He raised the latch and boldly entered followed by Harry.

This action was evidently a surprise to the inmates of the place.

There were four in number. At a table sat a negress. Near the door was Pete Jackson, and at the far end of the room was the other negro, Jeff Chase.

But in the centre of the room stood a fair-haired girl of sixteen. She gazed at the detectives in a wildly expectant way.

The negroes were so astonished that all they could do was to gaze in amazement and with starting eyeballs at the Bradys.

"Fo' de Law's sakes!" screamed Aunt Dinah. "Who am yo' dat comes into mah house wifout an invite?"

"Golly! I don't guess we frow dem out," said Jackson.

But Harry showed a pistol, and placed a hand on Jackson's arm.

"Hold on," he said sternly. "Yon are to keep quiet."

"Wha' yo' want here?" demanded Chase angrily.

"You will soon find out," said Old King Brady sternly. "We are detectives from New York, and we are in search of a missing young girl, whose description this girl answers."

"Ah! Thank heaven!" cried the young girl wildly. "You have come to take me back home. I am so glad, for I shall see my father once more."

"You are Myrtle Graves?" asked Old King Brady.

"Yes."

"How came you here?"

"I'll tell you," began Myrtle. Then she pointed accusingly at Aunt Dinah.

But Jackson cried:

"Hol' on dar, gal! Don' yo' say one wo'd or you'll get killed fo' it. Marse Chivington he kill yo'."

"Silence!" cried Old King Brady.

Harry covered the negro kidnapper with his pistol, while Old King Brady listened to the thrilling story of the missing girl.

Aunt Dinah was terrified.

Myrtle Graves told her story briefly and without embellishment. It showed that Burton had been the first one to blame.

Then Chivington had been trying to wring a ransom from her father.

When she had finished the three negroes were in a transport of terror.

Chase tried to make a break for the door.

But Old King Brady cried:

"Stand, or I'll shoot you dead. Handcuff them together, Harry."

This the young detective did. The blacks begged and implored and whined.

But Old King Brady said:

"The law must deal with you. We have only Chivington to settle with now."

Handcuffed together, with Dinah in the middle, the two blacks, Jackson and Chase, were helpless.

The detectives led them to the hotel, accompanying them. Their appearance created a sensation.

The Bradys looked for Chivington, but he was not to be found.

Myrtle was given a room next to the Bradys. One of the local constables was placed on guard at the door.

The three negroes were taken to the town lock-up, and held under armed guard. The arrest was all right.

"Now," said Old King Brady, "we will wire Graves that his daughter is safe and he can come on and get her. The next thing is to catch Chivington the murderer."

So they went down to the hotel office.

They were surprised to see the clerk, pale as a ghost, beckoning them.

"Gentlemen," he asked, "are you from the North?"

"We are from New York City," replied Old King Brady.

"And you are detectives?"

"Yes."

"What have you been doing?"

"We have rescued a young girl from three negro kidnappers, and are now on the lookout for a scoundrel named Jack Chivington, who is wanted for implication in the crime."

"Whew! You don't mean the colonel?"

"I don't know what you call him. It seems to me every other man down here is a colonel."

The clerk cast furtive glances at the door. The Bradys noted that the hotel office was empty. The guests were all out on the piazza.

They were looking in with a strange manner which seemed to portend some unusual occurrence.

"I'll tell you, gentlemen," said the clerk. "I'm a Northern man myself, and I know what this country is. Chivington

"You is a power here. You had better get out while there is time."

"Get out?"

"Yes. Leave the place."

"Do you think I am a fool?" said Old King Brady warmly. "I want to see Chivington. He is my man."

The clerk was ashy pale.

"Then, gentlemen, for God's sake do not remain in this hotel. It will mean your death and my ruin."

"I don't understand you," said Old King Brady. "Why should we consider ourselves in danger?"

"Because you are. Chivington has a gang at his back. There is but little enforcement of the law here. He and his men can terrorize the constables and carry a high hand. They will certainly kill you."

"Not if we kill them first."

"Do you mean fight?"

"If necessary."

"Did you arrest some negroes an hour ago?"

"Yes."

"You sent them to the lock-up?"

"We did."

"Listen! Do you hear that?"

Distant shots were heard and the sounds of an uproar. The clerk nodded.

"There you are," he said. "It's not the first time there has been a jail delivery in this town."

"What?" cried the old detective angrily. "Is that the case? Do they dare to break into the lock-up and release prisoners here?"

"That is just what they are doing."

For a moment the Bradys were dismayed. This was wholly an unlooked-for development.

They had congratulated themselves upon the arrest of the three colored kidnappers. To have their work thus undone was disheartening.

Old King Brady's eyes flashed with anger.

His hand rested upon the butt of his revolver.

For a moment the inclination was upon him to start at once for the scene; but sober second thought caused him to change his mind.

It flashed across him that the clerk was right.

There was much to consider.

It was true that in this little swamp community only superior force could rule.

Chivington and his hired ruffians had the upper hand. The tourists could not be counted upon for assistance.

The town authorities were easily overawed by superior force, and certainly the Bradys could hardly hope single-handed to win out.

In a moment their victory seemed about to be turned to defeat.

There was no time to lose.

"Are there no men of nerve in this place?" demanded the old detective. "Is there no one to uphold the law?"

The clerk shook his head.

"That is Florida," he said.

"Partner," said Harry, "we have got to change our plans."

"And at once."

"Yes."

"Look here," said the clerk. "Those fellows will be here in a few minutes. Is that young woman in Room 42 the kidnapped person you rescued?"

"Yes."

"Is she under guard?"

"Yes."

"Who is the guard?"

"A local constable named Luke Lacey."

"Lacey? He hasn't a bit of pluck. You had better go up and get her out of the way at once. If you don't she will go back into the hands of Chivington."

"You're the only white man we've met hereabouts," said Old King Brady warmly.

"That's all right. I'm a Northerner myself; but don't give me away. If they knew I assisted you they'd take my life."

The Bradys saw that they must make prompt work of it.

Certainly Chivington's first move would be to surround the hotel and capture the detectives.

If they fell into his hands now he would have a pretext for hanging them; and that he would do it there was no doubt.

So they quickly considered a plan of action.

For their personal safety they would have had no fear, for they could have found security in the darkness outside.

But they had no thoughts of leaving Myrtle Graves to again fall into Chivington's hands.

"We have rescued her once," said Old King Brady, "and she must be taken to a place of safety. Then we can return and run the villains to earth as best we can."

"Then we must act quickly," said Harry. "I believe they are coming."

A great uproar was heard in the distance.

The people gathered on the piazza were much excited. It was evident that they were looking for the coming of Chivington and his gang.

The detectives sprang up the stairs and reached the door of Myrtle's room.

The constable at the door was seen to be in a state of much fright.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I'm not feeling well. You'll have to get somebody to take my place."

The detectives laughed.

"All right. Under the circumstances, we'll excuse you, Lacey. It's all right. Go right along home."

CHAPTER XII.

A HOT PURSUIT.

The fellow slid out of sight quickly. The detectives tapped on the door.

They quickly acquainted Myrtle with the state of affairs.

The young girl was certainly frightened, but she was brave. She instantly accompanied the detectives.

The clerk had told them of a rear exit from the hotel and of the path down to the springs.

The Bradys had decided to go back to their boat and start for Sanford.

There they knew that law and order found abode. Chivington would not dare to follow them thither.

Down the rear stairs the detectives hurried their fair charge.

There was no time to lose.

The crowd of ruffians would soon be on hand and the hotel would be surrounded.

Escape then would be almost impossible.

So they made all haste. Leaving the hotel they struck into the shadows of the live oak growth and came upon the path which led to the springs.

And here, feeling secure for one brief moment, they paused.

The crowd of excited blacks and whites were coming. Foremost among them were Jackson and Chase, heroes now.

Behind them came Chivington, angry and vengeful. Scott and Wiley were at his heels.

The detectives could see all this in the lights of the railroad platform and the hotel.

The crowd surged into the hotel, and for a time they remained there.

Then there was a tremendous uproar.

The escape of the detectives had been discovered. The gang was beyond control.

Vengeance was uppermost in their minds. The Northern detectives should be harshly dealt with.

Out of the hotel they rushed with yells and cries of rage.

"Come!" said Old King Brady, "we have stayed long enough. It is time for us to get out."

"That's right," cried Harry, "and there is no time to lose."

This was true enough.

Some of the pursuers were coming toward the detectives, evidently on their way to the Springs.

Myrtle kept pace with the detectives without the slightest evidence of fear.

"If they overtake us we may have to fight," said Old King Brady. "In which case, Miss Graves, I advise you to push ahead to the Springs and wait for our coming."

"I am not afraid," said the young girl, pluckily. "I will do as you say."

Down the narrow path they rushed with all speed.

Now the starlight shone on the surface of the blue waters of the lagoon.

Just then heavy footsteps sounded close at hand.

A burly figure hurled itself through a clump of palmetto with a yell of triumph.

But that was all.

Old King Brady turned and crouched like a tiger

As the ruffian sprung forward ready to seize Myrtle the old detective lunged forward.

There was a dull blow, a gasping cry, and the fall of a heavy body. Then the fugitives pressed on.

They reached the shore now. There was not a moment to lose.

Harry sprung into the thicket and pushed the boat out into the water.

Then all leaped in and the detectives seized the oars.

They pulled out into the lagoon.

Just ahead was a wall of mist. If they could reach this they could feel safe.

But shots were heard and bullets splashed the water about them. This was evidence that they were seen.

"Pull, Harry!" cried Old King Brady. "We've got to make it."

The young detective needed no urging.

He pulled hard and a moment later they were in the fog.

But bullets continued to fly about them, and Old King Brady, as a precaution, made Myrtle lie down in the bottom of the boat.

Soon, however, they felt the current of the river under them and were out of range.

Yet they did not let up with the oars.

They knew that pursuit would certainly follow.

They had the start and that was all.

Down the river they sent the boat with all speed.

After a while from sheer exhaustion they rested on their oars.

They listened intently.

"Do you hear anything?" asked Old King Brady.

"Not a thing," replied Harry.

"They must be a good ways behind," said Myrtle.

"That is where we must keep them," declared Harry. "At least until we get to Sanford."

"That's right."

The boat drifted on down the sluggish current.

At times they were in a patch of fog. Then they would shoot out into the starlight.

The cypress forest on either side was dark as Erebus.

From its depth came all the wild sounds of the swamp. The creak of frogs, the shrill notes of insects and the cries of night birds.

Once more the Bradys resumed their oars.

They rowed on for a good while.

Then Harry looked at his watch by the light of a match.

"It will soon be daylight," he said. "It is half past three."

Just then Myrtle gave a start. She inclined forward and listened.

"I hear oars," she said.

The detectives were startled.

"You do?"

"Yes."

"Behind us?"

"That is the strange part of it. It is ahead of us."

The detectives listened

"That is true," cried Harry. "It is ahead of us."

"Then we need fear nothing," said Old King Brady. "It is doubtless a party of deer hunters."

This seemed reasonable.

Deer were hunted after dark in the swamps by means of beat and torch. That this might be a hunting party was possible.

But a sudden thought came to Old King Brady.

"The sound grows plainer," he said. "They are coming nearer. It is likely they are deer hunters. But, to be on the safe side, we will wait in some covert here until they pass."

"A good idea," agreed Harry. "Who knows but that they have gone on ahead by some short cut through the swamp and are cutting us off."

"I thought of that. We will be on the safe side."

The boat was turned into the shadows under the overhanging branches of a cypress tree.

Here the fugitives waited silently.

No light was seen down the river. This was evidence that they were not deer hunters.

They were rowing silently and slowly up the current.

Their figures could be dimly seen in the starlight.

It was plain that two of them were white men. There were two blacks at the oars.

Not until very near the covert of the fugitives did they make a sound. Then one said:

"Confound it, Jackson, you don't think they could have gone off through some other channel or branch of the river?"

"Dere ain' no odder channel, sah. Dars jest dis one."

"We ought to see something of them by this time."

"Yas, sah! Mebbe dey come along soon, sah."

It was Chivington who spoke.

The negroes, no doubt, were Jackson and Chase. The other white man might be Scott or Wiley.

Their game was plain.

They had hoped to cut off the fugitives. But good fortune had sided with the Bradys.

Slowly the boat passed.

When it was well beyond sight and hearing, Harry and Old King Brady pulled out into the current and continued their course down stream.

They now had no fears of further danger and felt sure of reaching Sanford in safety.

Once there, they believed that the coast would be clear.

Daylight now came on rapidly. They were drawing near the mouth of the river.

Soon they would be in the lake and then they would soon be at Sanford.

Finally the sun rose and flooded the everglades.

So warm were its rays that the detectives were obliged to take off their coats.

They had almost reached the mouth of the river when Harry pointed to the shore and said:

"Look! there is a landing."

This was true.

A small wharf of palmetto logs jutted out into the river. A path led from it into the forest.

"I believe once upon a time a river steamer found its way up here once or twice a week," said Old King Brady. "Doubtless there is a plantation beyond."

Just then Myrtle gave a startled cry. She had glanced back up the long reach of river behind them.

Full half a mile it extended in a straight course, until it made a bend.

Around this bend a steam launch suddenly glided.

Even at that distance the two men in its bow could be easily recognized as Chivington and Scott. The launch was coming at full speed, and it was only a matter of minutes before it would come up with the row-boat.

CHAPTER XIII.

AT THE PLANTATION.

For a moment the Bradys were aghast at this development.

"Whew!" cried Harry. "We are done for!"

This seemed a fact.

Already they were seen, and Chivington was waving his arms and yelling fiercely.

Old King Brady drew his revolver.

He aimed it at the distant villain. Then he replaced it. He shrank from taking human life.

"They'll catch us sure, Harry," he said. "It's a case of fight."

"The odds are against us."

"That is true."

"What shall we do?"

"We must give up the boat."

"What?"

"We must get ashore."

The two detectives glanced at the landing. They did not know what was beyond it.

But any position was better than that in the open boat.

So they headed the boat for the landing.

A moment later they were clambering out.

"Run ahead, Miss Graves," commanded Old King Brady. "Take the path. We will overtake you."

The young girl obeyed.

The Bradys then opened fire on the launch, hoping to hold it back. But the occupants got under cover and answered the fire.

So the detectives fled.

Along the path through the jungle they ran at full speed. Myrtle was ahead of them.

Suddenly a clearing appeared and the vivid green of an orange grove was seen just ahead.

The next moment they came out into view of an old plantation house and its acres of orange grove, pineapple fields and cotton.

On the broad piazza sat a couple of ladies. On the steps stood a handsome young man.

Negroes were at work in the grove and all was the scene of busy life and occupation.

On a gate post was the sign:

"Delta Plantation."

For one moment the detectives halted.

"What's this?" cried Harry. "From the frying pan into the fire?"

"No!" declared Old King Brady. "There are good people here. I am sure. Indeed, it is better to chance it than to take to the swamps."

"That is so. There are women. Perhaps they will champion Miss Graves."

But Myrtle was already on her way to the piazza.

The ladies rose as she approached. The handsome young man tipped his hat.

"Oh, will you not give us help?" cried Myrtle, beseechingly, as she stumbled up the steps. "I am in great trouble. My enemies are close behind."

"What is your trouble, Miss?" asked the young man, as he glanced at the detectives. "Are these men pursuing you?"

"Oh, no. They are my friends. But there are others coming from the river who mean us harm."

Exclamations of solicitude and sympathy came from the ladies on the piazza.

"Assist the young lady up here, Horace," said the elder of the ladies. "Let us hear her story."

This the young man did. She sank, half exhausted, in a chair.

The detectives had paused in the drive below and were looking back toward the river.

While Myrtle was briefly telling her story to the two women, who listened with interest, the young man named Horace approached the detectives.

"My name is Horace Perkins," he said. "My mother and I own this plantation. Can we do you service?"

"We are detectives from New York," said Harry. "Our names are Brady. The young lady was rescued by us from a gang of kidnappers a short while ago. They are pursuing us hotly."

"Kidnappers?"

"Yes. Did you ever hear of Colonel Chivington?"

"Chivington? Why, he is a sort of desperado from Wekiva."

"Just so! Well, he is the villain. He deliberately shot a man in cold blood down there yesterday."

"And he is coming here with a gang of cutthroats?"

"Yes."

"Well," said Perkins, "I think we had better give them a warm reception."

"Can you assist us?"

"Assist you! Well, we will give them all the fun they want. I'll call up Sandy Cole, our overseer. He is the man to handle them."

Perkins put one finger in his mouth and gave a peculiar call.

In reply a thickset, square-jawed man came rushing out of the orange grove.

"Do you want me, Mr. Perkins?"

"Listen to the story of these men," said Perkins.

Old King Brady told the story briefly.

Cole set his firm jaw and a light of resolution shone in his eyes.

"Let's hear what Chivington has to say," he said.

The man in question now suddenly appeared.

At his back were Scott and Wiley, and half a score of hard-looking negroes and whites. Jackson and Chase were in the gang.

Chivington, with Scott and Wiley, were in the lead.

As they came up Chivington affected an air of bravado.

"Hello, Perkins," he said. "We are after those two chaps."

Perkins stepped in front of the Bradys.

"How are you, Chivington," he said, quietly. "What do you want of them?"

"We have use for them."

"Well, what?"

"That's my business."

"Well, it's mine, too."

The colonel was livid.

"Oh, you're going to take the part of girl stealers, are you?"

"Of girl stealers?"

"Yes."

"These men are detectives."

"Are they?" sneered Chivington. "Are you going to let them fool you that way?"

"I believe their story."

"Well, you're a fool, Perkins! They have fooled you. They are downright thieves and liars. They have stolen my niece away from me. I mean to hang them!"

"That's what!" cried Scott. "I'll swear to that."

"Where is your niece?" asked Perkins, quietly.

"That's her up there on the piazza."

"She declares that you kidnapped her."

"She lies, the hussy! She is a rebellious piece. I've had lots of trouble with her, and her old mammy, Aunt Dinah, can tell you so."

"Why should she seek to remain with these two men?"

"She is anxious to go North. She is a rebellious minx. I shall put her under restraint."

"I don't believe you will," said Old King Brady. "Your story is too thin, Chivington. The girl is going to be returned to her parents in New York. You are a murderer, and you must yield to arrest."

"That's a good bluff!" sneered Chivington. "But I am armed with the law. Our constable, Mr. Lacey, is here to arrest you, and he has a warrant."

Sure enough, there stood Lacey, looking sheepish and uncertain.

Old King Brady's eyes flashed.

"You conservative scoundrel!" he cried. "You dare to enlist the law to shield kidnappers and murderers! Don't you know this man shot young Burton down in cold blood!"

"In self-defense!" said Chivington.

"I didn't see it," said Lacey. "But witnesses agreed it was done in self-defense."

"Then those witnesses lied. We were witnesses and we will swear that it was cold blooded murder."

"Your testimony is biased," said Chivington.

"But it counts," said Harry. "We shall resist this warrant for our arrest!"

"You resist the laws of Florida?"

"Yes, under the circumstances."

"You had better submit to the execution of the warrant, gentlemen," said Lacey. "If the charge is false, it can very easily be proved in court."

"With Colonel Chivington for judge and jury," said Old King Brady. "I think not. We are officers of the law ourselves, and know our right. I am surprised that you should stand in with such a gang as this."

"I am a constable," said Lacey. "I was given the warrant and it was my duty to serve it."

Perkins had listened to all this. He was irresolute.

"I am a citizen of Florida," he said. "I can't very well resist the law. Who gave you the warrant, Lacey?"

"It was sworn out by Colonel Chivington and Judge Barles gave me the warrant to serve."

Perkins looked dubious.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I don't see any help for you."

Chivington's eyes glared evilly.

Old King Brady grimly placed a hand on his pistol butt.

"If we were to yield," he said, "we would be dangling from cypress limbs in yonder swamp within the hour. We will not yield."

"Then seize him, men!" cried Chivington, madly. "The law must be enforced."

"Hold!" cried a stern voice.

It was Sandy Cole, the square-jawed overseer.

He stepped forward and his keen eyes were fixed penetratingly upon Lacey.

"Let's see the warrant," he said.

Lacey reluctantly drew a document from his pocket. Cole took it and glanced over it.

Then he did a startling thing.

He tore it in bits.

"It's a forgery," he said, harshly. "It's all a gum game. Now, Chivington, git off this plantation right smart or I'll hang you up to the first cypress hereabouts."

It was a most startling turn of affairs.

But the colonel was only for a few moments staggered.

Then his face grew purple and red by turns.

"W—what are you doing?" he roared. "Sandy Cole, you had no right to tear up that warrant. What did you do it for?"

A grim smile flickered across the overseer's face.

"To save these men from being murdered."

"Curse you! That is contempt of court."

"Bah! You have little respect for court yourself. That old judge is in his dotage, and was read out of office long ago. Ye can't fool me. Ye've got no warrant to serve. Now, ye're trespassers on Mr. Perkin's land."

Chivington gasped in impotent fury.

"I'll flay you alive for this, Cole," he gritted.

"Will you?" said the big overseer, taking a step nearer.

"Yes, I will! I'll have your heart's blood. I——"

Chivington never finished the sentence. With an automatic sweep of the arm the overseer smote him full across the mouth.

So forcible was the blow that the villain turned a half somersault backwards.

When he regained his feet his head rang like a chime of bells and two of his front teeth were lodged in his throat.

Coughing them up, together with a quantity of blood, he glared wildly about him.

Then he grasped his revolver, and before a move could be made to prevent he fired full at Cole.

The overseer did not move a muscle, but he was not struck. The bullet shattered one of the windows in the house.

Before the villain could fire again, however, Old King Brady's right hand went up.

The old detective was a dead shot.

The bullet struck the villain's hand and shattered two of the fingers. He dropped the weapon with a howl of pain.

At the same moment Cole blew a shrill whistle.

From all parts of the plantation whites and blacks came rushing to the scene.

Yells of pain and rage escaped Chivington.

"At them, boys!" he yelled. "Kill every mother's son! Don't let 'em escape!"

But Harry and Old King Brady did some instant and remarkable shooting.

Harry shot Scott's hat off his head, cut his ear in twain, and spoiled a finger of his right hand.

Old King Brady put a bullet through Wiley's coatsleeve, scraped a lock of hair from his temple, and then turned his attention to Jackson and Chase.

Such terrific shooting terrified the gang, and they started to flee.

Some shots were fired by them, but all went wide.

The overseer Cole was quickly organizing his men.

Arms were procured, and the defenders sought the cover of a packing house near by.

Chivington and his gang were now in the cover of the palmetto, and making their way back to the river.

They seemed to have become imbued with sudden panic.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE OVERSEERS' PLUCK.

For a moment Chivington gasped and stared at the big overseer in a dazed sort of way.

There was something so powerful in Cole's speech and convincing in his manner that it held even his foes enthralled.

In vain Chivington tried to rally them.

They would not respond, and kept on until they reached the launch.

Seeing this the plantation men started in pursuit. The launch, however, glided away downstream to a point of safety.

"My friend," said Old King Brady to the plucky overseer, "you did a great act in tearing up that warrant. I shall never forget the favor."

"That's all right," replied Cole modestly. "I saw the colonel's game, and knew that was the only way to beat it."

"I did not know what to do," said Horace Perkins. "I always try to be friendly with all my neighbors down here."

"Which is proper," agreed Old King Brady. "I could not blame you; but we were in a bad hole."

"Mr. Perkins don't know Chivington and his men as well as I," said Cole.

"Well, are we entirely out of danger?" asked Harry. "Can we get to Sanford without trouble?"

Cole and Perkins exchanged glances.

"It is hard to tell," said the overseer. "It is likely, however, that we are not done with Chivington yet."

"He is down the river in the channel between us and Sanford," said Old King Brady.

"Yes."

"Is there no way for us to get across country and reach the railroad?" asked Harry.

"Yes," said Perkins; "but it is a long trip. They might, if they learned the fact, intercept you easily."

"If you could reach Longwood you might make it," said Cole.

"Where is Longwood?"

"Ten miles from Sanford."

"How can we get there?"

There was a moment's silence. Perkins and the overseer looked at each other.

"There is one way," said Cole. "If you could get a team to take you across country——"

"We will pay a liberal price," declared the old detective. "For ourselves we would ask nothing better than to be allowed to take our chances in the wilds with these fellows; but the missing girl must be taken to a place of safety and kept until she can be returned to her parent in New York."

Perkins' face lit up.

"Is that the way of it?" he cried.

"Yes."

"Well, let her stay right here, then. She could hardly find a safer place. You can then send down to Sanford for a posse of men, and make open warfare on the Wekiva gang."

The idea struck both detectives favorably.

Their faces cleared.

"Will you keep her?" asked Old King Brady.

"Certainly we will. I know mother will be glad to have her for a guest."

"Perhaps we had better see her."

"Very well."

With this they approached the house. The women had fled into the house during the shooting.

But they came out now onto the piazza.

"Mother," said Perkins to the elder of the two ladies, "this is Mr. Brady of New York. He is the detective who has come down here to rescue the young lady from kidnappers and return her to New York."

"She has told me her story," said Mrs. Perkins. "I think the law should deal with Chivington."

"Well, I am determined that it shall; but for the present Miss Graves must have a place of safety in which to stay."

"She shall stay right here," said Mrs. Perkins, putting her arm about Myrtle in motherly fashion.

Myrtle looked her gratitude and satisfaction, but said nothing.

"That's all settled," said young Perkins, turning to the detectives. "Now, you are at liberty to begin operations at once."

"Which we shall do," said Old King Brady. "You do not think Chivington will make an attack on this house?"

"If he does he will get the worst of it, you may be sure."

"We shall endeavor to get assistance from Sanford. Do you know the town marshal there?"

"Yes. His name is Jack Ward. You can be sure of his help. He will stand by you."

"Good! How long will it take to get him over here? Can you tell me the best way of communicating with him?"

"Well," said Cole, thoughtfully, "there's nothing like a personal interview, in my opinion."

"That is just so," agreed Old King Brady. "I think we will go up to Sanford at once."

"Wait," said Perkins, with sudden thought. "I have a capital idea."

"Well?"

"I have in my stable a couple of good mustangs. They can gallop you over to Sanford in an hour and a half."

"We will pay you for them."

"Not a cent. I am interested in this affair. For reasons of my own I want to see Chivington rounded up."

"Well, you shall have that pleasure," declared Old King Brady confidently. "I think we can safely guarantee it."

"We are going to help you every way we can."

"Which is overkind."

"No, it is our duty and our pleasure. Sambo, saddle the mustangs, and bring them up here."

"A'right, sah."

The coon vanished in the direction of the stables.

In a few moments he came riding back on one of the mustangs and leading the other.

The detectives were quickly in the saddle.

They shook hands with Cole and Perkins.

"We will look out for the girl," declared Perkins. "Have no fear for that."

"Then we will promise to bag our men," declared Old King Brady. With a salute the detectives rode away.

They were soon galloping through the immense pine forests on their way to Sanford.

CHAPTER XV.

WHICH IS THE LAST.

On over the sandy road galloped the Bradys.

And as they rode on, the day began to wane.

Soon deep shadows were all about them in the depths of the woods, and it became difficult to see the road.

But suddenly a light shone out far ahead.

Then a distant shrill shriek was heard, which was comprehensive to the detectives.

"We are near the railroad," said Harry. "That is a locomotive whistle."

"Yes."

"Sanford can't be far away."

"Oh, no! It must be very near at hand. See, there are other lights."

In a few moments they were satisfied that they were entering the outskirts of the town.

They kept on and soon the buildings were visible.

They rode past the railroad station and turned down toward the Sanford Hotel.

Here they rode into a stable and left their horses.

Then they went into the hotel and registered and were assigned a room for the night.

After supper they inquired of the clerk:

"Can you tell us where to find Jack Ward, the town marshal?"

"Yes, sir!" replied the clerk, promptly. "He is right out there by the door. The man with the corduroy coat."

The detective saw a thickset man with ruddy features and fearless eyes by the door.

At once they approached him.

"Excuse me!" said Old King Brady. "Is this Mr. Ward, the town marshal?"

"It is, sir!" replied Ward. "What kin I do for you?"

Old King Brady showed his star.

"Secret Service!" he said.

Instantly a peculiar light came into the marshal's eyes. He cast a quick, furtive glance about.

"Lookin' fer game?"

"Yes."

"Come in hyar whar we kin talk on ther quiet."

The detectives followed the marshal into a side room. He closed the door.

"Wall!" he said, "what is yer lead, gentlemen?"

"We are after Jack Chivington!"

"Chivington! Gee-whiz! What have ye got agin him?"

"Two charges! Kidnapping and murder!"

The marshal whistled slowly.

"Chivington, eh? He has a big following hereabouts!"

"Can't help that! He must go back to New York with us!"

"Have ye requisition?"

"Yes, we got that in Jacksonville."

"Humph!" I reckon it kin be done, but thar may be a fight. He has a regular bodyguard about him all ther time."

"Well, will you assist us?"

"Certainly."

"We want a big posse of men. One hundred at least. He is now over by Delta Plantation, and we must surround him. You understand."

The marshal smiled.

"Thar's no need of that!" he said.

The detectives were surprised.

"Why?"

"He is right now in this ere town."

"What?" cried Old King Brady. "Chivington in Sanford?"

"Just so."

"Does he dare come here?"

"Oh, he dares do anything. He's here fer a fact. His boat is tied up at the landing."

Both detectives sprung up.

"That is enough!" cried Old King Brady. "Luck is with us. Let us go after him!"

"Wait a minute."

The marshal put up his hand.

"What for?"

"Well, I'll tell ye. We had better go a little slow."

"And let him escape?"

"Oh, no! He won't do that. But you see, if we go out after him hastily we may mix matters up."

"Now, I don't believe he knows you two detectives are in town. If he did you bet he'd be layin' wires fer ye."

"You think so?"

"Sure!"

"Well, what do you think his game was in coming here?"

"I opine he thought you would come over with the gal to take the train. He hangs around the depot now with his men."

"Oh, then he thinks he will intercept us?"

"So, I reckon!"

Old King Brady knit his brows.

"Perhaps that's the way to catch him," he said. "I am not so sure. Let me see! Why can't we surround the station when a train is coming in? Then we can nab him."

"Yes, we kin nab him. But there'll be shooting."

"Not if we can disarm him in time."

"That's not so easy."

Old King Brady's eyes gleamed with a determined purpose.

"We shall see;" he said.

"All right!" agreed Ward. "I'll get the men. But I think you had better lie low. If you are seen by him or any of his men, it may spoil the game."

"We will fix that."

"Ye had better stay here in the hotel until it is time to go up to the railroad station."

"We have a better plan."

"What?"

"I'll show you!"

The old detective pulled some materials from his pocket, and, with a few passes of his hands, effected a wonderful makeup.

Harry did the same.

They turned their coats inside out and reversed the rim and crown of their hats.

The marshal gazed at them spell-bound.

"Whew!" he gasped, "I'll be durned if I ever saw the beat of that. How did you do it?"

"That is one of the tricks of the trade," laughed Harry.

"Durn me, but if I could do that, I'd be a detective myself."

"That is not the only thing required to be a detective," said Old King Brady. "It is only one of many necessary qualifications."

"I'm a quitter," gasped the marshal. "You chaps know what yere about. I'm takin' orders from you. Will ye go along with me?"

"Yes."

"Wall, I'll bet if you met yer own mothers they wouldn't know ye."

"Then our disguise must be good."

"Wall, you bet."

With this the Bradys accompanied Marshal Ward to the street. It was now about nine o'clock.

It was almost time for the Tampa mail train.

They walked slowly along toward the depot.

Suddenly Ward put a hand on Old King Brady's arm.

"See that nigger jest crossing ther street?"

"Why, it's Jackson!"

"Ye know him?"

"Indeed, yes!"

"Wall, he's the right hand man of Colonel Chivington. Hello, there's Jeff close ahead of him."

"Then Chivington can't be far off."

"I reckon not!"

"Well," said Old King Brady, "they are making fer the waiting room. If they enter they are lost."

"What do ye mean?"

"How many doors are there?"

"This one, and another on the platform side."

"Well," said Old King Brady, "you and Harry go around and enter by that door. Then you take one door and let Harry take the other. I'll make the arrest."

The marshal nodded his head.

He and Harry went around to the platform. Old King Brady entered the street door.

And as he did so he saw Chivington standing by a window. Jackson and Chase joined him.

Chivington's right hand and wrist was in a sling, the result of the shot he got at Wekiva.

"He can't use a gun," thought Old King Brady. "It is going to be easy."

Just then Harry and the marshal entered by the other door. They exchanged signals with Old King Brady.

Then the old detective walked up to the three villains quietly. There were a dozen other people in the room.

They turned as he approached. For a moment they did not recognize him. But the detective's two hands came up, a revolver in each.

"Devils!" yelled Chivington. "Shoot him, Jackson! Quick!"

The negro's hand went to his pistol pocket. But the next moment a bullet pierced the palm.

"Hands up!" roared Old King Brady. "The game is ended."

Both negroes fell on their knees in terror. Chivington made a leap for the door but run into the arms of Harry and Marshal Ward. He was instantly handcuffed.

The wame was won.

Jackson and Chase surrendered and were handcuffed together. They were placed in the Sanford jail and a heavy guard placed over them.

Old King Brady sent a telegram to Eugene Graves in New York, telling him of the whereabouts of his missing daughter. Graves came on by the first train and was met at Sanford by Myrtle. It was a happy reunion.

The kidnappers were taken to New York by requisition to answer to the charge of kidnapping. They were convicted and then Chivington was claimed by the Florida authorities to answer the charge of murder and expiated his crimes on the scaffold.

Jackson and Chase went to jail for twenty years, and the Bradys still have the voodoo charm, or the clew found in the dark.

And so ended the case. But the detectives were soon busy upon another of which we may tell later.

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS AND THE BANKER: OR, THE MYSTERY OF A TREASURE VAULT," which will be the next number (126) of "Secret Service."

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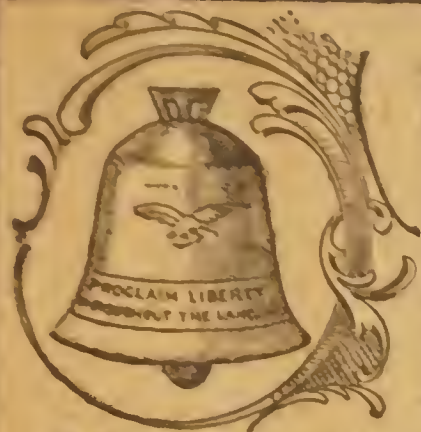
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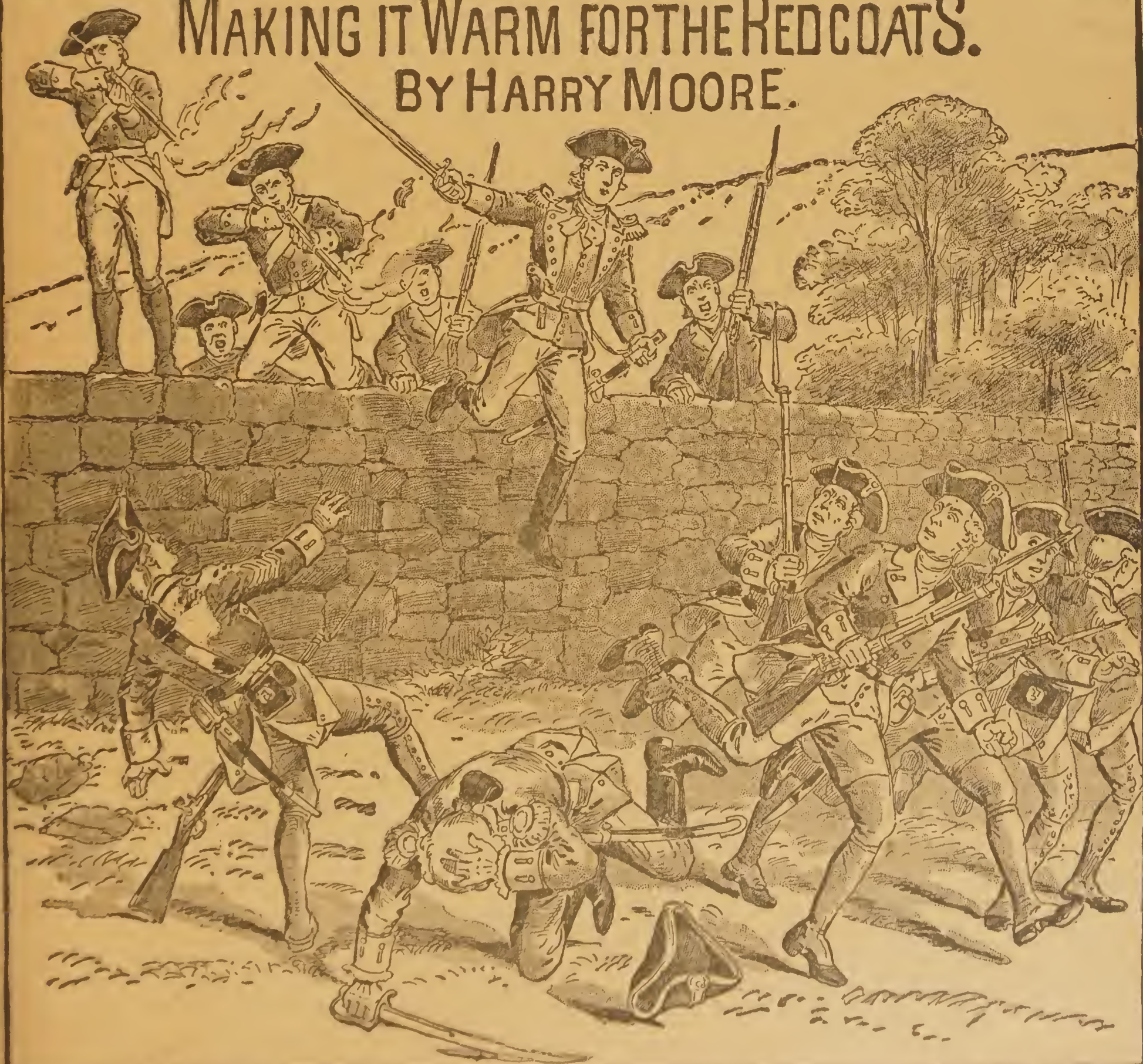
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